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EDUCATIONAL EQUITY THROUGH POLICY : INSIGHTS AND IMPACTS FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

Prof. Shailendra Kumar Chaturvedi*

Abstract :

Educational equity remains a pivotal concern in global policy frameworks, aiming to ensure that all individuals, regardless of their socio-economic, racial, ethnic, or geographical background, have access to quality education. This paper explores various international policy initiatives and their impacts on achieving educational equity, drawing insights from a diverse range of contexts including North America, Scandinavia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Southeast Asia. Through a comparative analysis, the study highlights the effectiveness of policies such as affirmative action, equitable funding formulas, and inclusive educational practices. It also examines the role of technology in bridging educational gaps, especially in under-resourced areas. The findings indicate that while some regions have made significant strides through targeted policies and reforms, others continue to face substantial barriers due to persistent socio-economic disparities and political constraints. Key success factors identified include stakeholder engagement, adaptability of policies to local contexts, and continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. This paper argues for a nuanced understanding of cultural and regional specificities in the implementation of educational policies to enhance their effectiveness and sustainability. The conclusion calls for a collaborative global effort to share best practices and foster partnerships that drive educational equity forward.

Keywords : Equity, education, disparities, opportunities, critical, curriculum

Introduction

Educational equity represents a foundational principle in the pursuit of not only fair but also inclusive and effective schooling systems worldwide. It hinges on the premise that every individual, regardless of their socio-economic background, ethnicity, gender, or geographic location, deserves equal access to quality education. This concept extends beyond mere enrollment numbers to encompass equality in the availability of educational resources, opportunities for academic and personal growth, and equitable outcomes that prepare all students for success in their personal and professional lives.

The importance of educational equity is underscored by its direct impact on the broader objectives of social justice and economic advancement. In a globalized world, where education plays a crucial role in shaping competitive economies and cohesive societies, disparities in education can perpetuate cycles of poverty and social inequality. Addressing these disparities

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through effective policies is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for nations aiming to harness the full potential of their populations.

The purpose of this article is to evaluate the effectiveness of various educational policies in promoting equity across different regions. By examining the approaches adopted in diverse contexts—from affluent societies in North America and Scandinavia to developing regions in Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia—this article aims to identify successful strategies and pinpoint areas where further improvements are necessary.

Methodology

Methodologically, this analysis employs a comparative approach, drawing on policy documents, academic research, and case studies to assess how different educational systems have addressed challenges related to equity. This allows for a broader understanding of how contextual factors such as cultural norms, economic conditions, and political landscapes influence the effectiveness of educational policies. Through this comparative lens, the article seeks to offer valuable insights into the global efforts towards achieving educational equity, and to propose actionable recommendations for policymakers and educators alike.

Conceptual Framework of Educational Equity

Educational equity is a complex and multifaceted concept, which at its core seeks to ensure that all students have the same access to quality education, similar opportunities to engage and learn, and equal chances to achieve favorable educational outcomes. The scope of educational equity extends from the provision of resources and learning materials to the inclusivity of the

curriculum and the support systems in place for diverse student populations. Essentially, it involves creating conditions within the educational system where students' outcomes are not predictable by their socio-economic status, ethnicity, location, or other personal characteristics.

Challenges to Equity

Several pervasive challenges hinder the achievement of educational equity worldwide. Socio-economic disparities are among the most significant obstacles, with students from lower-income families often attending under-resourced schools. These schools struggle to provide quality education due to lack of funding, which in many cases leads to larger class sizes, fewer educational materials, and less access to technology and extracurricular programs. Moreover, racial and ethnic inequalities continue to plague educational systems around the world. In many regions, students from minority backgrounds face systemic biases and lower expectations from educators, which can negatively impact their academic achievement and long-term educational prospects.

Geographic isolation also plays a critical role in limiting educational equity. Students in rural or remote areas often have less access to quality education due to the physical distance from urban centers where more resources are typically concentrated. This isolation can result in fewer qualified teachers, limited course offerings, and less exposure to cultural and educational opportunities that are more readily available in larger cities.

Theoretical Perspectives

Several theoretical frameworks underpin the pursuit of educational equity, each offering unique insights and solutions. Social justice education, for example, emphasizes the need

to understand and challenge the societal structures that perpetuate inequalities. This approach advocates for an education system that not only addresses inequities but also teaches students to be aware of and challenge social injustices.

Multicultural education is another critical perspective, focusing on incorporating diverse cultural content in the curriculum and promoting an understanding and appreciation of all cultures in the educational process. This approach helps in breaking down racial and ethnic barriers and in promoting inclusivity in educational settings.

Inclusive education is centered on the premise that all children, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic, or other conditions, should be integrated into mainstream schools. It argues for tailored teaching strategies, accommodations, and modifications to ensure that all students, including those with disabilities, have opportunities to succeed in regular classrooms.

Together, these theories provide a robust framework for understanding and addressing the myriad challenges to achieving educational equity. By integrating the principles of social justice, multiculturalism, and inclusiveness, educational systems can be better equipped to provide equitable opportunities and outcomes for all students. As we continue to navigate the complexities of educational equity, it is imperative that policies and practices are informed by these foundational theories, ensuring that every student has the support and resources necessary to thrive.

Global Overview of Educational Equity Policies

Educational equity policies across the globe

vary significantly, shaped by historical, cultural, economic, and political contexts. This section provides a comparative look at how different regions implement policies aimed at promoting educational equity.

North America: Focus on Title I in the U.S.

In North America, particularly in the United States, Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 stands as a cornerstone policy aimed at reducing disparities within education systems. Funded by the federal government, Title I provides financial assistance to schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families. The primary goal is to ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Schools use Title I funds to provide additional academic support and learning opportunities, supplementing regular classroom instruction. This includes additional teachers, professional development, special instructional spaces, and a range of additional resources and instructional materials. However, despite its good intentions, Title I faces challenges such as variability in funding and sometimes inefficient allocations that do not always align perfectly with the schools in most need.

Scandinavia: Comprehensive Welfare and Education Systems

Scandinavian countries, notably Finland and Sweden, are renowned for their comprehensive welfare models, which include highly equitable education systems. These nations emphasize early childhood education and care (ECEC) as foundational to lifelong learning and social equity. Finnish education policy, for instance, supports equality through legislation that provides the same educational opportunities to every child, regardless of their background or geographic location. Swedish

education policy also prioritizes inclusion and equity, offering free education from a young age and adult education opportunities, which are integral parts of the lifelong learning framework. Both countries focus heavily on teacher training, ensuring high standards of education delivery across the board. The result is an educational system with very low variability between schools, contributing significantly to educational equity.

Sub-Saharan Africa: Initiatives to Improve Access and Quality

In Sub-Saharan Africa, educational equity is hampered by issues such as poverty, conflict, and rural-urban divides. Several initiatives aim to address these challenges. For example, Kenya has implemented policies like the Free Primary Education (FPE) in 2003, which led to a surge in enrolment rates. However, issues with quality and disparities in access between urban and rural schools remain prevalent. Similarly, South Africa's post-apartheid education policies have focused on improving access to education for all racial groups, with significant budget allocations to previously disadvantaged schools. Programs targeting teacher training, infrastructure development, and learning material provision are common, aiming to improve the quality and outcomes of education in impoverished and rural areas.

Southeast Asia: Balancing Outcomes Among Diverse Ethnic Groups

In Southeast Asia, countries like Singapore and Malaysia demonstrate a focus on balancing educational outcomes among their diverse ethnic populations through targeted policies. Singapore's approach includes the 'Ethnic Integration Policy' and 'Mother Tongue Language Policy', which ensure ethnic integration in schools and maintain language and cultural continuity among different ethnic

groups. This is complemented by high standards of teacher training and resource allocation that ensure all schools are well equipped. In Malaysia, policies such as 'Dasar Pendidikan Kebangsaan' (National Education Policy) aim to foster unity among the ethnic Malay, Chinese, and Indian populations. Special provisions and affirmative actions are in place to ensure that students from indigenous and underprivileged backgrounds have enhanced access to education.

Conclusion

Each region's approach to educational equity reflects its unique societal values and challenges. While North America focuses on compensatory funding, Scandinavia invests in uniform quality and inclusivity from early education. In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa confronts structural challenges with policies aimed at improving access and quality, whereas Southeast Asia's efforts are geared towards balancing ethnic and cultural diversities within their education systems. These diverse strategies highlight the global endeavor to mold education systems that are not only accessible but also equitable and capable of providing quality education to all.

Case Studies - Successes and Challenges

This section delves into specific national contexts to understand how different countries implement policies aimed at promoting educational equity. Each case study highlights unique strategies and the accompanying challenges faced in these endeavors.

Case Study 1: Finland's Approach to Equitable Education

Finland is often celebrated for its exceptional educational system, which is characterized by a strong emphasis on equality. Two major

aspects of Finland's educational policy are teacher training and curriculum design, which collectively foster an equitable learning environment. Finnish teachers are required to have a master's degree, and the profession is highly respected and competitive, attracting top talent. This rigorous training ensures high-quality teaching across all schools, minimizing differences in educational quality between urban and rural areas or between schools in affluent and less affluent areas.

Furthermore, Finland's national curriculum is designed to ensure consistency and comprehensiveness, providing all students with access to the same high-quality education regardless of their background or the school they attend. The curriculum also emphasizes creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills rather than rote learning. However, as global migration increases, Finland faces new challenges in integrating students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds into its educational system, requiring ongoing adaptation of its policies and practices.

Case Study 2: South Africa's Post-Apartheid Educational Reforms

Post-apartheid South Africa has faced significant challenges in dismantling the deeply entrenched educational inequalities left by the apartheid regime. The government has implemented various reforms aimed at promoting equity, such as the introduction of free and compulsory basic education and the development of policies to improve infrastructure in historically disadvantaged schools. Despite these efforts, substantial challenges remain, including disparities in resource allocation between urban and rural schools, teacher distribution and training, and issues of safety in schools.

Moreover, educational outcomes for many black and colored students are still significantly worse than those for white students, partly due to socio-economic factors and the lingering effects of past educational policies. The success of these reforms is also often hindered by bureaucratic inefficiencies and corruption, which delay or dilute the impact of the policies intended to foster equity.

Case Study 3: India's Right to Education Act

India's Right to Education Act (RTE), enacted in 2010, is a landmark law that mandates free and compulsory education for all children aged 6 to 14 years. This act represents a significant step forward in reducing educational disparities by legally ensuring access to quality education. Since its implementation, there has been a notable increase in enrollment rates across the country.

However, the Act faces challenges in terms of quality and consistency of education provided. Many schools, especially in rural areas, suffer from inadequate facilities, a lack of trained teachers, and poor student attendance rates. Additionally, while the RTE has helped increase access to education, disparities in educational outcomes based on socio-economic status, caste, and gender persist, indicating the need for more comprehensive strategies to address these inequalities.

Case Study 4: Brazil's Strategies for Addressing Educational Inequalities among Indigenous Populations

Brazil has implemented several strategies aimed at addressing educational inequalities among its indigenous populations, recognizing the unique cultural and linguistic needs of

these communities. The Brazilian Constitution of 1988 and subsequent laws support the development of differentiated educational systems that respect indigenous cultures and languages, and federal programs have been created to train teachers from indigenous communities.

Despite these policies, there are significant ongoing challenges. Many indigenous schools are underfunded and lack basic infrastructure. Furthermore, there is often a mismatch between the culturally relevant curriculum promised by law and what is actually taught, due to a shortage of trained teachers fluent in indigenous languages and cultures. The geographical isolation of many communities also complicates efforts to deliver consistent and quality education, requiring innovative solutions and substantial government support to achieve true educational equity.

Conclusion

These case studies from Finland, South Africa, India, and Brazil illustrate both successes and ongoing challenges in the quest for educational equity. Each country's approach provides valuable lessons on the importance of comprehensive policies, the necessity for high-quality teacher training, the need for culturally relevant curricula, and the relentless commitment required to overcome historical and structural barriers to equity.

Role of Technology in Promoting Educational Equity

In the quest for educational equity, technology plays a pivotal role by offering innovative solutions to traditional challenges. However, the benefits of technology in education are not automatically universal; addressing the digital divide is crucial to ensure that technological advancements benefit all students equitably.

Digital Divide

The digital divide refers to the gap between individuals who have access to modern information and communication technology (ICT) and those who do not. This divide exists not only globally, between different countries but also within nations, often reflecting and exacerbating existing socio-economic and geographic inequalities. To achieve educational equity, it is essential to address this divide because technology can enhance learning opportunities significantly by providing access to information, virtual teaching, and interactive learning platforms that might otherwise be inaccessible to underprivileged students.

In many regions, students in rural or impoverished areas may lack reliable internet access or the devices needed to participate in digital learning. Overcoming this divide involves not only providing the necessary hardware and broadband access but also ensuring adequate training for both students and teachers to effectively use these technologies.

E-Learning Platforms

Successful integration of technology in education can be seen in various initiatives globally. For example, the Khan Academy offers free online courses and has partnered with schools in underserved communities to integrate its resources into the curriculum, providing personalized learning experiences that cater to the pace and level of individual students. Similarly, platforms like Coursera and EdX have partnered with universities to offer free or low-cost courses, making high-quality education accessible to a broader audience.

In South Korea, the government has implemented a comprehensive digital textbook

program, which aims to provide every student with tablet computers and access to digital textbooks. This initiative not only reduces the cost of physical books but also includes interactive content that can enhance understanding and engagement.

Policy Implications

Effective policies are critical in ensuring the equitable distribution of technological resources. Government initiatives can mandate broadband expansion to underserved areas, provide subsidies for devices to low-income families, and invest in training programs for teachers in digital literacy. However, policies can also hinder progress if they fail to consider the diverse needs of all student populations or if funding for technology initiatives is not sustained.

For instance, policy frameworks must include provisions for regular updates to technology and training to avoid obsolescence and ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness. Moreover, privacy and data protection need to be integral parts of educational technology policies to protect students from potential harms associated with digital learning environments.

In conclusion, while technology holds great promise for enhancing educational equity, its success depends on thoughtful and inclusive policy-making that addresses the digital divide and ensures that all students can benefit from technological advancements in education.

Critical Analysis of Policy Effectiveness

Assessing the effectiveness of educational equity policies requires a multidimensional approach, considering both quantitative outcomes and qualitative impacts. Ensuring that these policies not only reach their intended targets but also produce sustainable,

meaningful change is a complex challenge influenced by various factors.

Evaluation Methods

Policy effectiveness in educational equity is typically measured through a blend of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative measures often include metrics such as enrollment rates, graduation rates, standardized test scores, and achievement gaps between different demographic groups. These data provide clear, measurable indicators of progress or lack thereof and are crucial for tracking the reach and immediate impact of policies.

However, quantitative data alone cannot capture the full spectrum of impacts that equity policies might have. Qualitative evaluations, therefore, play a critical role. These may involve interviews, focus groups, and case studies with students, teachers, and administrators to gather insights into how policies affect educational experiences and outcomes on a more personal and detailed level. Such qualitative data help in understanding the nuances of policy impact, including student engagement, teacher satisfaction, and changes in school culture.

Barriers to Success

Several common barriers can hinder the successful implementation of equity-focused policies. First, insufficient funding can lead to incomplete or ineffective implementation. Equity initiatives often require substantial upfront investment in resources, training, and infrastructure, which may not be adequately covered by unstable or insufficient funding sources.

Another significant barrier is resistance from within educational systems and communities. Changes in policy that aim to redistribute resources or alter traditional practices may

face opposition from those who perceive these changes as threatening to their own interests or values. Additionally, bureaucratic inertia and complexity can delay or dilute the implementation of policies, with lengthy procedures for approval, lack of coordination among different governmental agencies, and inconsistent policy enforcement.

Adaptability and Sustainability

For equity-focused policies to be effective and sustainable, they must be adaptable to different cultural and economic contexts. This adaptability involves designing policies that are flexible enough to be customized to local needs and conditions without losing their core objectives. For instance, educational equity policies in urban areas might focus on technological integration and reducing teacher-student ratios, whereas in rural areas, the priority might be building infrastructure and ensuring basic educational access.

Sustainability also requires that policies have built-in mechanisms for feedback and continuous improvement. This could involve regular assessment and updates to the policies based on both successes and failures, ensuring they remain relevant and effective over time. Long-term commitment from all stakeholders, including government bodies, educational institutions, and communities, is crucial. This commitment can be fostered by demonstrating the benefits of these policies through clear evidence of improvement and by engaging stakeholders in the policy-making process, thereby ensuring their interests and concerns are addressed.

In conclusion, evaluating the effectiveness of educational equity policies is a comprehensive process that requires considering both quantitative results and

qualitative impacts. Overcoming barriers to implementation involves acknowledging and addressing the financial, cultural, and bureaucratic challenges that can impede progress. Finally, adaptability and sustainability are essential to ensuring that these policies can be effectively applied across different contexts and over time, ultimately leading to lasting improvements in educational equity.

Recommendations for Future Policy Directions

Achieving educational equity is an ongoing challenge that requires dynamic, innovative, and cooperative policy-making. Future directions in educational equity policy should focus on global cooperation, continuous learning and adaptation, and deeper engagement with local communities.

Global Cooperation

International collaboration is crucial in the pursuit of educational equity. Countries can benefit immensely from sharing best practices, resources, and experiences in tackling common challenges related to educational disparities. Global partnerships, such as those fostered by UNESCO or the Global Partnership for Education, enable countries to learn from each other's successes and mistakes, facilitating more effective and efficient policy solutions. For example, Scandinavian countries can offer valuable insights into teacher training and curriculum development, while nations like Singapore provide models for integrating technology in education.

Moreover, international cooperation can help in mobilizing resources for low-income countries, ensuring that financial constraints do not impede the right to education. Such collaborations might include funding, but also

extend to technology transfer, professional development for educators, and infrastructure support. Ensuring equitable education globally contributes to broader goals of reducing poverty and promoting peace and stability worldwide.

Continuous Learning and Adaptation

Policies must be flexible and responsive to changing conditions and emerging insights. Continuous learning from ongoing research and data collection should inform policy adjustments and adaptations. Educational policies should be designed as living documents that can evolve based on systematic and rigorous evaluations. This approach ensures that policies remain relevant and effective in meeting the needs of all students.

For instance, as digital learning tools become more integral to education, ongoing research into their impacts on different student groups can help in fine-tuning technology integration policies to ensure they promote rather than hinder equity. Regular feedback loops involving policymakers, educators, and researchers will facilitate the continuous improvement of educational strategies.

Engaging Local Communities

Local communities play a crucial role in the successful implementation of educational policies. Policies crafted and implemented with active community involvement are more likely to address the actual needs and challenges of those communities. Engagement strategies could include participatory policy design, where community members—including parents, teachers, and students—are active participants in creating and revising educational programs.

Communities are also vital in monitoring and evaluation processes, providing ground-level

feedback on policy impacts that might not be visible at higher administrative levels. This bottom-up approach ensures that policies are not only theoretically sound but also practically effective and culturally sensitive.

In conclusion, the path towards greater educational equity requires a blend of international collaboration, adaptive learning policies, and deep community engagement. By embracing these approaches, policymakers can create more inclusive, responsive, and effective educational systems that serve the needs of all students, regardless of their background.

Conclusion

This analysis of global educational equity policies has revealed a complex landscape of strategies, challenges, and successes. From North America's Title I funding aimed at enhancing resources in low-income schools, to Scandinavia's holistic approach to inclusivity and quality education, each region offers unique insights into the pursuit of educational equity. In Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, efforts to address structural and cultural barriers demonstrate the critical need for policies tailored to specific local conditions and challenges. Despite the varied approaches, common themes emerge, such as the importance of teacher quality, access to resources, and the integration of culturally relevant pedagogies.

However, the journey towards educational equity is far from complete. This analysis underscores the need for continued innovation and proactive policy measures. Policymakers, educators, and community leaders must collaborate to design and implement strategies that not only address current disparities but also anticipate future challenges. Ensuring that educational equity

advances is crucial for building more just and inclusive societies.

Looking forward, further research is essential to deepen our understanding of what works and what does not in the quest for educational equity. Future studies should explore the long-term impacts of equity policies, particularly in the areas of technological integration and the educational outcomes for marginalized groups. Additionally, research into the effectiveness of policy interventions in different cultural contexts would provide valuable insights that could guide more tailored and effective approaches. Investigating the role of non-traditional educational settings and informal learning environments could also expand our understanding of comprehensive educational equity.

In conclusion, while significant strides have been made, much work remains to ensure that educational equity is not merely an ideal, but a tangible reality for all students globally. The findings from this analysis should serve as a catalyst for continued efforts and a guide for future research, driving forward the global agenda of educational equity.

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ELECTORAL RESPONSES TO PARTY SWITCHING : ANALYSING VOTER BEHAVIOR IN BIHAR FROM YEAR 2000 TO 2024

Prof. Kundan Kumar Singh*

Abstract :

This research paper delves into the electoral repercussions of party switching in Bihar, India, from year 2000 to 2024. Through a comprehensive analysis of electoral data, party records, and voter interviews, the study sheds light on the dynamic interplay between political party allegiance shifts and voter behaviour in this region. The investigation employs a mixed-method approach, integrating quantitative electoral data analysis with qualitative insights from voter interviews, providing a multifaceted understanding of the phenomenon.

The findings indicate that party switching, a familiar yet underexplored facet of political strategy, significantly influences voter behaviour, often altering the electoral landscape. The impact of such defections is profound in Bihar, where political affiliations are deeply intertwined with social identity and regional dynamics. The study identifies patterns in voter response, noting that the consequences of party switching vary depending on the defector's profile, the timing of the switch, and the prevailing political context.

Additionally, the research highlights the strategic calculations behind party switching, exploring how politicians weigh the risks and benefits of such moves. The paper also examines the role of media in shaping public perception of party switchers, adding a layer of complexity to voter reactions.

This paper contributes to the broader discourse on political party dynamics and voter behaviour, offering insights pertinent to scholars, policymakers and the electorate. By unpacking the nuanced relationship between party allegiance shifts and electoral outcomes, the study provides a deeper understanding of the fluid nature of political loyalty and its implications for democratic processes in Bihar and beyond.

Key Words : Party Switching, Voter Behavior, Bihar Elections, Electoral Dynamics, Political Allegiance, Electoral Outcomes, Political Strategy, Voter Perception, Electoral Trends, Political Parties, Electoral Shifts, Indian Politics

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Introduction

The political landscape of Bihar from the year 2000 to 2024 is a vibrant tableau of shifting allegiances, emergent political entities, and evolving electoral dynamics. This period in Bihar, with a rich political history and a significant role in Indian politics, has been marked by notable fluctuations in party loyalties, coalition formations, and the rise of individual political personas. Understanding these shifts provides a lens into the state's political evolution and the broader mechanisms of Indian democracy.

The study of party switching, where politicians change their party affiliation, is particularly salient in the Indian context. Such actions can have profound implications for electoral outcomes, party dynamics, and policy directions. With its complex interplay of caste, culture, and political ideology in Bihar, party switching offers a unique vantage point to explore the intricacies of voter behaviour and democratic engagement.

This research aims to dissect the electoral responses to party switching in Bihar, seeking to answer critical questions: How do voters in Bihar perceive and react to party switching? What are the electoral consequences of such switches? How do these dynamics inform our understanding of political loyalty and democratic processes in the region? The objectives are to illuminate the causes and effects of party switching, understand its impact on voter behaviour, and explore its broader implications for the political landscape in Bihar.

To achieve these aims, the study employs a mixed-methods methodology, combining quantitative analysis of electoral data with qualitative insights from surveys and interviews. This approach allows for a

comprehensive exploration of the phenomenon, capturing not only the statistical trends but also the personal narratives and sentiments that underlie voter behaviour.

The quantitative component involves an analysis of electoral results from 2000 to 2024, examining how party switching influences vote shares, seat tallies, and election outcomes. This data-driven exploration is complemented by a qualitative analysis of voter attitudes and perceptions, gleaned from surveys and in-depth interviews with a cross-section of Bihar's electorate, politicians, analysts, and party functionaries. This multifaceted approach provides a nuanced understanding of the motivations behind party switching and its reception among the electorate.

In conclusion, this research aims to contribute to the discourse on party dynamics and voter behaviour in Bihar, offering insights that are academically valuable and pertinent for political strategists, policymakers, and the electorate. By delving into the phenomenon of party switching, this study sheds light on the underlying currents of Bihar's political landscape, enhancing our understanding of the complexities of democratic engagement in one of India's most politically vibrant states.

Empirical studies on voter behaviour in response to party switching

Empirical studies on party switching have applied these theoretical frameworks to various contexts, showing a range of motivations and outcomes. For instance, research in Latin America has highlighted how economic crises and ideological shifts drive party switching (Kato & Yamamoto, 2010), while studies in the United States have emphasised the role of electoral incentives

and policy disagreements (Nokken, 2000). In the Indian context, particularly in Bihar, party switching is often influenced by a complex interplay of electoral dynamics, identity politics, and individual ambitions, reflecting a multifaceted phenomenon shaped by diverse factors.

The literature on party switching presents a multifaceted theoretical landscape, with perspectives ranging from rational choice to social identity and institutional factors to individual psychology. These frameworks provide valuable insights into understanding the phenomenon of party switching in Bihar, illustrating how individual motivations, structural conditions, and the broader socio-political context shape it. By integrating these perspectives, this review sets the stage for an in-depth analysis of party switching in Bihar, offering a comprehensive lens through which to interpret the empirical findings of this study.

Empirical studies on voter behaviour in response to party switching have offered varied insights, demonstrating how electoral responses can be influenced by multiple factors, including the political context, the defector's characteristics, and the switch's timing. These studies provide a foundation for understanding the complexities of voter reactions, particularly in a nuanced political landscape like Bihar's, which is intricately woven into the broader tapestry of Indian politics.

Voter reactions to party switching have been explored in diverse political environments, revealing that the consequences of such actions can vary significantly. For instance, Desposato (2006) found in Brazil that voters are less likely to support switchers, perceiving them as opportunistic. In contrast, a study by McAdams and Johannes (1988) in the

US context indicated that the personal reputation of the switcher could mitigate the electoral impact of party switching. These findings suggest that voter responses are not uniform but are shaped by various factors, including perceptions of politicians' motivations and integrity.

In the Indian context, research has illustrated that regional, caste, and religious identities profoundly influence voter behaviour, making the political landscape particularly complex (Yadav & Palshikar, 2009). Bihar presents a unique case with its deep-rooted caste politics and shifting party alliances. The state's political history, marked by the dominance of identity politics and the rise of regional parties, provides a rich backdrop for analysing voter responses to party switching. Studies focusing on Bihar have highlighted how voter loyalty can often be more aligned with individual leaders or caste affiliations rather than political parties per se (Chandra, 2004).

However, more literature needs to specifically address the intersection of party switching and voter behaviour in Bihar. While there are studies on voter behaviour and party politics in Bihar, few delve into how party defections influence electoral outcomes in the state. This gap is significant given Bihar's role as a bellwether for regional politics in India and its distinctive political dynamics.

Moreover, the broader Indian political scenario provides a contrasting backdrop to Bihar's political narrative. The national political landscape, characterised by the dominance of major parties like the BJP and INC and the rise of regional parties, highlights different dynamics influencing voter behaviour. The contrast between national and regional trends underscores the importance of contextualising Bihar within the broader Indian political

scenario to understand the specificities of voter behaviour in the state.

Additionally, the literature primarily focuses on the immediate electoral consequences of party switching, with less emphasis on the long-term impacts on voter trust and political engagement. This represents another gap, as understanding the prolonged effects of party switching could provide deeper insights into its implications for democratic processes and political stability.

In summary, while empirical studies offer valuable insights into voter behaviour in response to party switching, there is a need for more focused research on this phenomenon within Bihar's unique political context. The existing literature provides a foundation. However, further investigation is required to fully comprehend how these dynamics play out in Bihar's complex political landscape and how they compare with or diverge from broader trends in Indian politics. Addressing these gaps will enrich the academic discourse and offer practical insights for political strategists, policymakers, and the electorate, enhancing our understanding of the intricate interplay between party switching and voter behaviour.

Contextualizing Bihar's political landscape within the broader Indian political scenario:

Regional parties, caste-based politics, and individual political figures have shaped Bihar's political narrative, which separates it from the often more centralised and nationally focused politics in other parts of India.

Nationally, Indian politics has been dominated by two major parties, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Indian National Congress (INC), alongside many regional parties. The national scene has shifted towards a more

centralised form of governance, especially with the rise of the BJP. However, states like Bihar continue to exhibit a solid regional flavour in their politics, with local parties and leaders playing pivotal roles.

Bihar's political arena is significantly influenced by caste dynamics, where political allegiances are often closely tied to caste identity. This contrasts with the broader national scenario, where although caste is still relevant, issues of development, economy, and nationalism have also taken centre stage. In Bihar, parties like the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Janata Dal (United) (JD (U)) have their politics deeply entrenched in caste affiliations and local issues, reflecting a political culture that is markedly different from the national landscape.

Party switching in Bihar must be understood against this backdrop of localised politics and caste-based allegiances. The motivations for and implications of party switching in Bihar are distinct compared to other states or the national context, influenced by the state's unique political, social, and economic fabric.

Methodology

This research employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to comprehensively analyse electoral responses to party switching in Bihar from 2000 to 2024. This section outlines the dataset, analytical framework, data validity and reliability considerations, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Dataset Description:

1. **Electoral Results:** The dataset includes electoral data from various state assembly and national parliamentary elections in Bihar from 2000 to 2024. This data encompasses vote shares, seat tallies, and party affiliation details sourced

from the Election Commission of India. The dataset enables a comparison of electoral outcomes before and after party switching.

2. **Surveys:** The research incorporates data from surveys conducted with voters across Bihar. These surveys gauge voter perceptions, attitudes, and reactions to party-switching events. The survey questions cover various topics, including awareness of party switching, perceived reasons for switching, and its impact on voter trust and electoral choices.
3. **Interviews:** In-depth interviews were conducted with voters, political analysts, party members, and defectors. These interviews provide nuanced insights into party-switching motivations, strategic implications, and voter reactions. The interviewees were stratified to ensure diverse representation across caste, gender, age, and political affiliation.

3.2. Analytical Framework:

1. **Statistical Methods:** Quantitative analysis involves employing statistical methods to identify trends, correlations, and potential causal relationships within the electoral data. Techniques such as regression analysis, time-series analysis, and comparative statistics are utilised to assess the impact of party switching on electoral outcomes and identify voter behaviour patterns.
2. **Qualitative Analysis:** The qualitative component includes a thematic interview and survey responses analysis. This analysis seeks to identify recurring themes, narratives, and perceptions of party switching. It provides contextual depth to the statistical findings, offering insights into the motivations, strategies, and voter sentiments that underpin the electoral data.

Historical and Political Context of Bihar

From 2000 to 2024, Bihar's political landscape underwent significant transformations, marked by new political alliances, the rise and fall of key political figures, and shifting voter allegiances. These changes reflect Bihar's evolving political identity and offer insights into broader regional and national trends. At the turn of the millennium, Bihar's politics was predominantly shaped by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), led by Lalu Prasad Yadav. The RJD's influence, however, began to wane due to governance challenges and corruption allegations. In 2005, a significant shift occurred when the Janata Dal (United) (JD (U)), under Nitish Kumar's leadership, formed a government in coalition with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). This alliance marked a new phase in Bihar's politics, emphasizing governance and development. The JD (U)-BJP partnership lasted until 2013, when JD (U) severed ties with the BJP, citing ideological differences. This period witnessed the resurgence of the RJD and the forging of new alliances, notably the Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) in 2015, which included JD (U), RJD, and the Congress, challenging the BJP's ascendancy. However, the political landscape took another turn in 2017 when JD (U) realigned with the BJP, showcasing the fluid nature of Bihar's political alliances. This period was marked by focusing on social welfare schemes, infrastructure development, and attempts to mitigate caste-based politics. By 2020, the state saw heightened political competition with the emergence of new parties and the strengthening of existing ones, reflecting a diversification of the political spectrum. The RJD continued to be a significant player, evolving under the leadership of Tejashwi Yadav, Lalu's son.

Major Political Shifts and Trends :

The period from 2000 to 2024 gradually shifted from identity-based to development-oriented politics, although caste and social issues remained significant. The entry of new parties and the realignment of old ones indicated a more fragmented and competitive political environment. Voter behaviour also evolved, emphasising governance, development, and youth leadership.

In summary, Bihar's political journey from the year 2000 to 2024 is a narrative of evolving political identities, shifting alliances, and an electorate increasingly seeking governance and development alongside traditional social justice and identity politics. This complex tapestry reflects the dynamic interplay of regional and national influences shaping Bihar's political ethos.

Statistical Analysis of Electoral Outcomes :

The statistical analysis focused on electoral data pre- and post-party switching events. A comparative analysis of vote shares and seat changes provided a quantitative measure of the electoral impact of party switching. For instance, in cases where prominent leaders switched parties, their new parties often saw a significant increase in vote share in the subsequent election, suggesting a direct impact of individual politicians' influence on voter behaviour.

Regression analysis was employed to control for other variables, such as economic factors, campaign spending, and candidate profiles, to isolate the effect of party switching. The findings indicate that party switching has a statistically significant impact on electoral outcomes, with switchers' parties experiencing an average increase of 5% in vote share in the subsequent election cycle.

Voter Surveys: Perceptions, Attitudes, and Responses to Party Switching :

Voter surveys revealed nuanced attitudes towards party switching. Most respondents perceived party switching as a strategy for personal gain rather than ideological realignment, reflecting scepticism about politicians' motivations. However, the impact of these perceptions on voting behaviour varied. While some voters expressed a decreased likelihood of supporting switchers, others were indifferent, suggesting that the context of the switch and the individual politician's reputation are crucial factors.

Surveys also highlighted that the impact of party switching is moderated by voter loyalty to individual politicians versus parties. In regions where political figures had strong personal followings, their party switching did not significantly deter their supporter base.

Interview Insights: Narratives and Perspectives from Party Switchers, Opponents, and Voters :

Interviews with party switchers revealed a range of motivations behind their decisions, from disagreements with party leadership to aspirations for higher political roles. These narratives often contrasted with public perceptions, as switchers typically framed their decisions regarding political ideology and public service. Opponents of switchers, on the other hand, often portrayed these actions as opportunistic, using such instances to mobilise their supporters. This dynamic was particularly evident in campaign rhetoric, where party loyalty was emphasized. Voters' perspectives from interviews mirrored the survey findings but added personal anecdotes and deeper insights into their decision-making processes. Many voters expressed disillusionment with frequent switchers, associating them with political instability and a lack of commitment to constituents.

Discussion of Findings in the Context of the Literature

The statistical findings align with existing literature that suggests party switching can influence electoral outcomes, confirming hypotheses that switchers can impact their new parties' vote shares. The voter surveys and interviews add depth to these findings, illustrating the complex interplay of trust, personal loyalty, and political ideology in shaping voter responses to party switching.

The scepticism and varied voter reactions observed in Bihar resonate with findings from other regions, underscoring the universal aspects of voter behaviour in the face of party switching. However, the nuanced differences in Bihar, such as the significant role of individual politician loyalty, highlight the importance of local political contexts in shaping these dynamics. Furthermore, the findings underscore the importance of personal reputation and the context of the switch, echoing theories that emphasise the interplay of individual agency and broader political structures in party-switching decisions.

In summary, the analysis underscores that party switching is a multifaceted phenomenon in Bihar, with significant electoral implications influenced by a complex set of factors, including individual politicians' influence, voter perceptions of political integrity, and the broader political context. The findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of party switching's role in political strategy and voter behaviour, offering insights relevant to political actors and observers alike in the dynamic landscape of Bihar politics.

The findings from this research offer a nuanced understanding of the dynamics at play when politicians in Bihar switch parties. They highlight the complexities of voter

behaviour and the multifaceted nature of political allegiance in the state. These results are interpreted below, drawing connections to existing theories and empirical studies and examining the interplay of party identity, candidate identity, and the salience of local versus national issues in shaping voter responses.

Interpretation of Results of Existing Theories and Empirical Studies

The statistical evidence that party switchers can influence electoral outcomes in Bihar resonates with rational choice theory, suggesting politicians switch parties to maximise their electoral advantages. However, voter surveys and interviews indicate that while some voters follow politicians based on personal loyalty, others are deterred by perceptions of opportunism. This aligns with social identity theory, which posits that political decisions are often influenced by group affiliations and loyalty.

The mixed responses from voters suggest a nuanced electorate that is not solely driven by party or candidate identity but considers a constellation of factors. This complexity aligns with the agency-structure framework, where individual actions (party switching) intersect with broader societal norms and expectations, influencing voter behaviour.

Significance of Party Identity and Candidate Identity in Voter Decision-Making

The findings highlight a significant dichotomy between party and candidate identities in Bihar's political context. While some voters exhibit strong loyalty to parties, others are more influenced by individual candidates, particularly in regions with strong personal followings. This dichotomy is crucial for understanding electoral dynamics in Bihar, where individual politicians often command

significant influence independent of their party affiliations.

The importance of candidate identity over party identity in specific contexts suggests that charismatic leadership or personal connections can sometimes transcend party boundaries, influencing voters in ways that traditional party loyalty does not. This dynamic has significant implications for political strategy, suggesting that parties might benefit from emphasising individual candidates' qualities, particularly in regions with strong personal followings.

The Role of Local vs. National Issues in Influencing Voter Responses to Party Switching :

The research findings suggest that local issues and personal loyalties often override national political narratives in influencing voter responses to party switching in Bihar. Despite the increasing influence of national parties and issues in Indian politics, Bihar's electorate demonstrates a nuanced engagement with politics, where local dynamics and individual politician's actions can significantly impact electoral outcomes.

This emphasis on local over national issues is particularly evident in voter reactions to party switching, where the context of the switch, including the reasons behind it and the local political landscape, plays a crucial role in shaping responses. This finding underscores the importance of understanding regional political contexts in India, where state-level dynamics can differ markedly from national trends.

In conclusion, the discussion illuminates the intricate interplay of the party and candidate identity in Bihar's electoral politics, emphasising voter behaviour's nuanced and locally grounded nature. The findings reinforce

the significance of individual agency within broader political and social structures, offering valuable insights for political strategists, policymakers, and scholars seeking to understand the complexities of electoral politics in regional contexts like Bihar.

Conclusion

This study has systematically explored the electoral repercussions of party switching in Bihar from 2000 to 2024, revealing nuanced voter responses and significant impacts on electoral outcomes. Key findings demonstrate that party switching influences vote shares and electoral success, with voter perceptions of switchers varying from scepticism to indifferent loyalty, depending on the individual politician's reputation and the context of the switch.

These findings underscore the importance of understanding the local political landscape and voter sentiments when considering party switching as a strategy for political parties and candidates. The mixed voter responses highlight the need for parties to manage such transitions carefully, emphasising transparent communication about the reasons behind party switching to mitigate potential voter backlash. For individual politicians, the findings suggest that maintaining a positive personal reputation and a strong connection with constituents is crucial, especially when navigating the complex dynamics of party allegiance.

Policymakers should also take note of these dynamics, recognising the potential for party switching to influence electoral stability and voter trust in the political system. Ensuring transparency and accountability in political processes could help mitigate cynicism and enhance democratic engagement.

Future research should delve deeper into the long-term effects of party switching on political careers and party structures, and explore comparative studies across different Indian states or regions to understand the broader implications within diverse political contexts. Additionally, examining the role of digital media in shaping voter perceptions of party switching could offer valuable insights into an increasingly connected world.

In conclusion, this study contributes to a richer understanding of the interplay between party allegiance, voter behaviour, and electoral outcomes, offering valuable perspectives for stakeholders in Bihar's political landscape and beyond.

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EFFECTS OF GENDER QUOTAS ON POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE AND INTEREST : A CASE STUDY OF BIHAR

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Abstract :

The aim of the present paper is to understand the effects of gender quotas on political knowledge and interest of elected women members through a study of women representatives in local government institutions in Bihar, India. The result shows that reservation for women can be an important impetus to boost women's political knowledge and interest and expedite the process of women's empowerment directly to encourage them. In the paper it is argued that the women interviewed for the study had gained a certain extent of knowledge and interest as a direct outcome of their work as elected representative, and that in this respect it appears that quotas can be a feasible apparatus for women empowerment.

Keywords- Women empowerment, Gender Quota, Political knowledge, Interest, Trust, Confidence, Bihar, Panchayati Raj, India

Introduction

A growing number of countries are introducing different forms of gender quotas in elections to equal the gender balance of their political institutions. India also amended its constitution in 1993, institutionalizing village councils (panchayats) in every village and requiring that women fill a third of all panchayat seats. Consequently millions of Indian women are entering the public sphere at local level. However the use of gender quotas presents an argument on the relationship between women's political representation and their socio-economic positions, as quotas may lead to unparalleled leaps in the socio-economic positions of women (Dahlerup, 2006). In India where most women are supposed to be dependent on their family because of the patriarchal social system, how can gender quotas empower women? Many scholars have used the notion of "proxy women" (Omvedt, 2005; Chattopadhyay & Duflo, 2003) as an interpretation of elected women with only formal power, and argued that the presence of women is not necessarily identical with their empowerment. This paper seeks to investigate the link between quotas and political knowledge and interest which can contribute to the literature related to women empowerment.

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Literature Review

While reviewing the literature about political representation and empowerment of women, one cannot ignore the contribution of Phillips (1995) who argues that the base of representation should be shifted from "politics of ideas" to "politics of presence". This notion holds that political representation should display the features such as gender, race etc. in order to counter the partiality against them. Thus gender quotas are associated with a politics of presence. Where some studies (Sekhon, 2006, Kaul and Sahni, 2009) reveal that reservation itself cannot bring empowerment of women unless there is a positive change in the social structure and mind-set of the people. Their findings illustrate that neither the reservation for women nor their actual presence in the panchayat have helped in addressing the problems associated with the common village women.

On the other some studies suggest that women have become more independent in the decision making process but still face many difficulties in the course of their participation. For instance, Kudva (2003) argues that gender quotas in elections are an important strategy to empower women through increased participation in the political system. According to her the quota provision has made women more visible and more self-confident, but they still face opposition from other villagers and their male counterparts in Panchayats. Similar results can be seen in the study of Jayal (2006) in which she reveals that there are some signs that quotas have enabled the women to address their practical gender needs and interests.

Several studies have explained the problems of women representatives during the

participation (Shvedova 2005; Matland 1998; Baviskar 2003; Rai 2006; Hust 2004; Sivakumar & Maduresh 2006). However the major weaknesses of these studies are that they either describe the experiences of individual elected women, or only emphasis on the socio-economic profile of elected women representatives (Ghosh 1995; Banerjee 1998; Kaushik, 1997; Pai 1998; Santha 1999; Kapoor, 2002). Two other studies Hust (2002) and Chattopadhyay and Duflo (2004) have contributed to our understanding of the quota system in India and suggest that the quota for women is certainly an important impetus for women's empowerment but the aim of women's empowerment cannot be reached by quotas alone.

Thus the existing literature reveals that there is a need for more in-depth studies concerning effects of gender quotas on women's participation in politics. Regardless of valuable contributions by researchers in this field, there are still some gaps. For instance, to what extent the quota has an effect on their political knowledge and how it is related to the political interest. In the present research discourse, local governmental institutions in Bihar have also not received much attention and the impact of gender quota on the political approach of women representatives has not been judged yet. The present paper tries to fill in some of these gaps.

Gender and local governance in India

In its modern version the system of self-governance known as Panchayati Raj was introduced in 1959, and was further strengthened by the recommendation of the Ashok Mehta Committee (1978) report. The Indian Govern-

ment made an effort to create a strong local government system but inadequate women were elected to the panchayat and their participation was insignificant. Omvedt's (2005) study claims that many of these women did not even attend the meetings and merely gave their "thumbprint" as a signature to whatever decision that was taken. The 73rd and 74th Amendments were passed in 1992 and 1993 concerning rural local self-government and urban local-self administration (municipalities), which established the reservation of 33% of all seats in panchayats and municipalities for women.

Gender Quota : Bihar Model

Following the suggestions of the amendment acts, the states of India reserved 33% of seats for women in local self-government institutions, but the state of Bihar has gone ahead of this quota limit and through the Bihar Panchayat Raj Ordinance introduced a reservation of 50 % for women in local government institutions. The reform in Bihar is the first of its kind in India and according to the information made available by the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) there is no other countries where the local governance has adopted a reservation of fifty per cent (IDEA 2006). Following the Bihar Panchayat Raj Ordinance 2006, elections were held and more than 54% women candidates got elected.

The concept of women's empowerment

Empowerment is often theorized as a process (Cueva Beteta 2006; Kabeer 2001; Malhotra and Schuler 2005) which helps women to have control over their resources and ideology and greater self-confidence. Likewise Huyer and Sikoska (2003) also describe women's empowerment as a process that leads women

to distinguish themselves as capable of undertaking decisions and making choices about their lives, which involves ample levels of self-confidence and firmness. The present paper defines women's empowerment as continuum of some modules which include many things like having control and gaining further control, having a say and being listened to, being able to define and create from women's perspective, being recognized and respected as equal citizens and human beings with a contribution to make, capacity building and skill development especially and ability to plan, make decisions, organize and carry out activities (Sahay, 1998). As per said by the researchers that empowerment is a process and there is need for the incessant effort to achieve it. However at the same time it is also important to develop some indicators to judge it. The present paper attempts to evaluate it by understanding the impact of gender quotas on women's attitudes and activities.

Framework for impact of gender quotas-

To propose a better explanation of the impact of gender quota on the political attitudes of women representatives, two concepts, presented below, have been identified as the key virtues in a representative democracy. They are positively correlated to political empowerment (Verba, 1995), and have been used in earlier research to study the impact of electoral gender quotas on women's political engagement (Zetterberg, 2009).

1. Political Knowledge
2. Political interest

Research Method

The exclusive social political and economic background of Bihar is the primary reason

for selecting it for the study. The population is 103, 80 million (approx.) in which the female population is 49, 61 million (approx.). The literacy rate is 82 per cent, in case of males (73.39 per cent) and females (53.33 per cent), the all-India figures are 75.26 per cent and 53.67 per cent respectively. Additional reason for selecting Bihar as the location for the study was the change that has taken place there in the form of 50 per cent reservation for women in elected bodies of local government institutions. This is a matter of interest to discover the effect of gender quota on the political knowledge and interest of these women representatives. The collection of data was accomplished by a field study in Bihar, adopting a qualitative method, based on the information about people's own experiences and explanation of their own social situation.

The study was conducted by interviewing thirty women members from the different levels of the 'Panchayati Raj' system (Sarpanch, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti, Chairman and Vice Chairman of Zila Parishad and other members). The principle of maximal variation was used to find elected women with different backgrounds. The thirty women selected had varied characteristics regarding religion, caste, age, wealth, education, political background of the family.

The interviews were semi-structured as this allows more flexibility than structured interviews or surveys. To avoid the probability of questions being answered by their male family members, a personal interview method was applied. Despite the data collected through interviews, the other sources were official reports of the government of Bihar.

The secondary sources were books and articles published in journals and other published literature related to the research work. The location of interviews was mostly in Patna, but respondents were from Patna, Araria, Arwal, Gopalganj, Bhojpur, Gaya, Sitamarhi, Kishanganj, Munger, Purnia, Bihta, Mokama, Hajipur, and Samastipur. Interviews were sometimes held in the homes, at the training camps or at the Bihar Rajya Panchayat Samiti office in Patna.

Findings

Political Knowledge :

Barabas (2002) argues that knowledge has begun as one of the most important variables in the study of political science and it specifies information about the adjoining social and political realities which create an interest in participating in the process of change. (Hazel, 1984) A virtuous knowledge of political activities may be treated as an index of active interest in politics, which is very much required for developing suitable strategies for political action. Different scholars have established different results about the political knowledge of women. Several found that women have less knowledge whereas some found that women are knowledgeable. Narayan (1976) Mondak and Anderson (2004) ; as well as Delli Carpini and Keeter (1996), have established that women tend to know less about politics, but the present research reveals that 18 out of 30 women representatives have good knowledge about politics, and regarding the panchayat's works and activities. They had developed new knowledge about politics in general as well as about local issues important to their constituencies. For instance, one of the respondents said:

'Now I have become attentive of political and local issues. Obligations to the reservation which provided me an opportunity to participate in the political life, I am learning politics and I think it is good for everyone to be aware of this.'

This statement noticeably displays that if women get an opportunity to participate in the political field they can learn more about the problems and subsequently perform for the betterment of the people, and that women are willing to learn about the political system. They had also gained worthy information concerning the government programs and the development programs started by the panchayats. They were also able to identify the source of income of their panchayats like government funds, panchayat property, and collection of taxes etc. and confident enough to share their knowledge.

While showing a paper in her hand another respondent stated – "Look, this is a list of the programmes which the government is going to start here. I am going to update about it to the people here so that they can be aware of these and consequently help us to implement these programmes effectively"

She further said – "There are numerous complications in implementing the programmes and the most important is the lack of money. I think the government should increase the amount of funds. The basic problem is here we do not get sufficient money from the government."

This statement displays that these women have a good knowledge about the funds as well as the problems in implementing the programmes.

The paper also argues that these women have consummate a higher perceptibility which can be said a very important development for rural India. For example, one respondent said – "I try to dialogue with everybody in my area. In this manner I become aware of their problems. Then I converse it with my colleagues. I personally try to go everywhere as much as possible. Before the reservation it was not imaginable for me to go but at the present with the help of this quota system I can step out of my house and try to understand political field with my own experience."

Thus the quotas have created an prospect for women to achieve confidence, visibility and knowledge of the political sphere and in this respect the present paper supports the findings of Ban's (2006) study which clarifies that the women elected through quotas are well-informed and up-to-date about political activities. Subsequently it suggests that the women can increase knowledge from work experience if they get chance and thus it supports quota system because it gives a chance to women to work and know about the political field.

Political Interest

Classical studies have discovered about the reasons, levels and factors supportive and impeding the person's interest in politics. But according to Gidengil (1995) those conclusions may partially result from the view of politics as a man's game, conferred in male rapports and concentrating on issues that women do not find as prominent as men. Hence, it was quite important to find out the level of political interest of these women. When asked about how interested they were in politics, the respondents answered that they were very much interested, and that they

had established a greater interest in politics as a result of their new knowledge and by contributing in local politics. One respondent said,

"For me it is quite interesting to go and participate in the meetings. Although I get less time but still I try to manage it with my household works. I learned many political skills there. Now I watch news and discuss with my family and friends. I think when you start knowing about something new you also attain more interest in that."

The above statement shows that women have grown a not only increased interest but also they are now more voiced in their family and friend circle about discoursing any political, social or local issue. This can be seen as a worthy development in that form of social structure where earlier women were fitted only to perform domestic tasks and to be quite. It also points out that there is a straight link between knowledge and interest and they are vice-versa. For better explanation it can be revealed from the statement of another respondent,

"I contested elections because of the reservation. When I joined the office I did not know anything. But now slowly I become aware of many things. This has given me new knowledge. When I started knowing many new things I developed interest in politics. After that when I got interested I tried to know more. It is very noble experience."

They said that before quota system they were not involved in the political sphere as they believed that it was a men's world but now when they have acquired an opportunity to come in politics they found it interesting. Another respondent said,

"Before joining politics I thought that I am not appropriate for this. Furthermore there was not any chance for women in politics here. But when the government executed reservation policy this seat has become reserved for women. After some reluctance I stood for the election and won. It gave me a feeling that I am also able to serve my people."

She further added – "Now I ponder politics is not only men's game. We (women) also have many things to know and do. Thus I strongly support reservation for women. It renders a suitable stand for women to be active in political field."

Therefore it can be said that quota seems to be allied with increased levels of women's interest in politics. At the same time on the basis of the present paper it also can be proposed that with the women's experience in the political field the politics will not be only men's game in the future. It is very interesting to find out that some of the women who developed interest in politics have not acquired good education but still they have interest in understanding the politics thus there is a positive thing that if all of them will be highly educated they will be more interested in the political system.

Conclusion and discussion

This article proposes to evaluate the impact of gender quota to the women's political empowerment on the basis of two concepts: Political knowledge and political Interest. The data discloses that gender quotas has had a very positive impact on the political knowledge of women as most of the elected women representatives have a good knowledge about the political activities and work of the panchayat and have become more interested in political works. The reservation system has

also positive effects on women's political interest. The system has given a platform to the women to interact with social and political entities, making them more visible and gained the interest to perform their duties for the betterment of their community.

To summarize it can be stated that the reservation for women can be an important incentive to women's empowerment in India on village level but there is a need to speed up this process by application of supplementary policies which boost the self-confidence of women, build women's capabilities and remove operational obstacles. There is a need to change many facets of the existing gender relations, power distribution and to take firm decisions concerning power-sharing. On the basis of this paper it cannot be denied that these women members have gained a certain extent of ability and confidence as a direct outcome of the quota. In this respect it appears that the quota can be a reasonable tool for the political empowerment of women.

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Appendix

List of Respondents

Nr.	Age	Caste	Religion	Education	Wealth	Occupation	Political Family	Election layer of the PRI's
1	40		Muslim	5th Class	50000	House wife	Yes	Mukhiya
2	56	General	Hindu	Literate	240000	Agriculture	No	Ward Sadasya
3	29	SC	Hindu	5th class	18000	Labour	No	Ward Sadasya
4	58		Muslim	5th Class	28000	Agriculture	No	Ward Sadasya
5	35	SC	Hindu	Literate	50000	House wife	No	Zilla Sadasya
6	33	General	Hindu	Intermediate	18000	Teacher	Yes	Mukhiya
7	45		Muslim	Post Graduate	80000	House Wife	No	Zilla Adhayksha
8	25	SC	Hindu	Literate	18000	Labour	Yes	Ward Sadasya
9	26	OBC	Hindu	High School	100000	Business	Yes	Zilla Sadasya
10	43	General	Hindu	Post Graduate	1700000	Job	No	Zilla Adhayksha
11	38	General	Hindu	Graduate	100000	Business	Yes	Mukhiya
12	31	OBC	Hindu	High School	20000	Agriculture	No	Mukhiya
13	23	SC	Hindu	Graduate	25000	House Wife	No	Nagar Adhayksha
14	45	OBC	Hindu	Literate	90000	Agriculture	Yes	Nagar Adhayksha
15	40	OBC	Hindu	5 th Class	140000	House Wife	No	Mukhiya
16	45	SC	Hindu	High School	12000	House Wife	No	Pramukh
17	32		Muslim	5 th Class	45000	Business	Yes	Zilla Sadasya
18	27	General	Hindu	Intermediate	75000	House Wife	Yes	Ward Sadasya
19	30		Muslim	Post Graduate	-----	Business	No	Mukhiya
20	30	SC	Hindu	High School	200000	Agriculture	No	Zilla Sadasya
21	25	General	Hindu	Intermediate	96000	Agriculture	Yes	Pramukh
22	33	General	Hindu	Intermediate	25000	Agriculture	No	Nagar Adhayksha
23	26	SC	Hindu	7 th Class	50000	House Wife	No	Mukhiya
24	34	OBC	Hindu	Literate	56000	Agriculture	Yes	Zilla Sadasya
25	30	General	Hindu	Literate	70000	Agriculture	Yes	Pramukh
26	31	OBC	Hindu	High School	45000	Business	Yes	Nagar Adhayksha
27	41	OBC	Hindu	7 th Class	80000	House Wife	No	Zilla Sadasya
28	30	OBC	Hindu	High School	60000	House Wife	Yes	Zilla Adhayksha
29	45	SC	Hindu	Literate	85000	Agriculture	Yes	Mukhiya
30	28	SC	Hindu	Intermediate	40000	Housewife	No	Zilla Sadasya



UNDERSTANDING POLITICS, CULTURE AND SOCIETY: CASE STUDY OF BHOJPURI REGION

Dr. Chintu*

Abstract :

India is a land of enormous complexities and cultural diversity. It is in a state of constant flux. Social realities and cultural certainties are changing rapidly. Thus, a detailed understanding of contemporary social, cultural and countercultural institutions has never been more needed than it is today. It is in this context that I sought to understand and investigate the vast complexities between culture, politics and society in India and especially the Bhojpuri region.

Keywords : Culture, Institution, Dynamics, Superstructure, Bhojpuri, Region

Understanding the dynamics of culture

Culture is something which is not fixed or stable. What do we mean by that? It means that what makes sense for one period or region might not make sense for the people of other region or time. It is something we fight over, disagree over, we have arguments about, we have laws on one side and convention on other side. So, culture is a contested field. Culture and cultural practices, culture and symbols of culture, culture and meanings- all are fields of negotiations. And, it is natural to disagree on a fixed nature of culture. Culture is not a stable category. Punk might not look like culture to a lot of people here in the Eastern part of the world. Our traditional practices in various corners of the country which includes body piercing, body sacrifices could appear strange to people of other cultures and cultural traditions. So meaning and culture is something we fight over because it is associated with our identity. It is about a frame of practices that helps me define myself and locate myself in the larger group. Thus, culture is a constantly changing dynamic field where various forces and stakeholders seek to negotiate what they understand as culture.

Evolving nature of culture

Culture can evolve over a period of time or may be over centuries. What is acceptable at one point of time may not be acceptable at another period of time. Now, one obvious/ crucial question comes in the mind of any researcher that why do some cultures survive and others die down? This question brings us to the core focus in the politics of cultural or countercultural study. How does one define a culture as acceptable and some as unacceptable? How does one define a culture as legitimate and others as illegitimate? Traditionally culture has been

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reorganised as the culture of a small elite group of people with economic and social power. According to the Marxist understanding, culture is a 'superstructure' built on an economic base. The culture of those who have economic power, their culture will remain superior. It will acquire status, recognition, monetary benefits, prestige and all sorts of other benefits. Those people who possess economic power also possess cultural power. Their culture will be established as so called 'high culture'. All other cultural forms and cultural practices, experiences, and ways of knowing will be called 'low culture'. This is where the important interventions can be made by the researcher who is trying to understand politics of culture and counterculture. Culture established as 'high cultural' forms are in positions of authority, respectability while 'low culture' suffers as being backward. The irony here is that the so called 'low culture' is the culture of the masses, the culture of the larger group of people/ community/group. Thus, one can immediately wonder that why is the culture of the larger group of people being ignored? The point that I want to make here is that one way to control the subjugated classes is to deem them culturally backward and therefore to claim that their culture does not count. Culture is about identity; it is about different practices that help me to understand myself better.

Art, literature and Culture: Why and for Whom?

While going through the literature of art one question keeps coming up is that who is the art and literature for? This question is fundamental in the Marxist stream of thought especially the Neo Marxists have deeply

delved with this question. For them, it was a question of principle. This problem was also resolved long ago by Marxists, especially by Lenin. As far back as 1905, Lenin firmly pointed out that our literature and art should "serve the millions and tens of millions of working people".

Mao Tse Tung also emphatically pronounced that "literature and art which exist today are for the exploiters and oppressors. He argued that Literature and art are for the landlord class feudal literature and art calling literature and art for the bourgeoisie are bourgeois literature and art. With us, literature and art are for the people, not for any of the above groups". He argued that China's new Culture at the contemporary stage was an anti-imperialist, anti-feudal culture of the masses of the people under the leadership of the proletariat.

Another question comes in our mind is that who, then, are the masses or the people? According to Mao "The broadest sections of the people, constituting more than 90 percent of our total population are the workers, peasants, soldiers and the urban petty bourgeoisie. Therefore, our literature and art are first for the workers, the class that leads the revolution. Secondly, they are for the peasants, the most numerous and most steadfast of our allies in the revolution. Thirdly, they are for the armed workers and peasants, namely, the Eighth Route and New Fourth Armies and the other armed units of the people, which are the main forces of the revolutionary war. Fourthly, they are for the labouring masses of the urban petty bourgeoisie and for the petty-bourgeois intellectuals, both of them are also our allies in the revolution and capable of long-term co-operation with us".

The conceptual landscape of the social sciences has been radically altered by the writings of Michel Foucault. Much like the previous approaches, Foucault was concerned with representational complexity and the question of how knowledge is produced within a shared cultural context within defined historical circumstances. In his early structuralist writings, he explored the question that how it was possible to establish 'truth' when the concept had its own history with many meaning? To understand the varied use of category of truth, he argued that we had to look at the discourse of which it was a part, the system of representation which regulates what meaning can and cannot be produced. In his book, "Discourse Analysis" he went on to argue involve "configurations of rules of conduct, established texts and institutional practices each situated in a historically and socially specific set of cultural relations". In this way we can see that he was mainly concerned with the relationship between knowledge and power. The power/knowledge relationship is illustrated in throughout his work. In his book, 'Madness, Punishment and Sexuality', he explored how the way we think about normality and pathology and the modes of classification through which people are pigeon-holed. Adorno and Horkheimer coined the term 'The Cultural Industry' to suggest that "culture is now a production of capitalist corporations who produce commodities that purport to be democratic, individualistic and diversified, but are in actuality authoritarian, conformist and highly standardized. Thus, the mass culture which corporations produce is nothing but mass deception". This involves not just 'meanings' but the structuring of the human psyche into the conformist ways of the 'authoritarian personality'.

A Brief Introduction to the Bhojpuri Region, People, and its Society

Culture is said to be the replica of the socio-economic and political situation of the society. As I am dealing with the Bhojpuri culture, it seems that the songs, theatre, poetry, and literature of the region reflect the issues and the context of that society. To deal with the above questions, it is essential to introduce my field of study. Bhojpuri region is a socio-cultural entity which is spread across Western Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. Colonial and postcolonial sociologists and anthropologists mark the 19th century as a watershed in the history of migration and thus, similar can be found in the region at that time. Economic policies and caste system further helped in dispossessing labouring class of Indian agrarian societies. With slavery eradicated in the coloniser countries (England, France and Netherlands), a crisis in labour surfacing in the offshore plantations of the imperialist countries. Importing labour from the areas of continental Europe, West Africa and China seemed to be the only way to deal with the 'Labour Crisis'. Unable to bring their efforts to fruition and followed by the successful Mauritian experiment with importing Hill Collies (Dhangers from Chotanagpur region) to fuel the labour needs in the plantations resulted in the adoption of the same strategy by the imperial countries. This resulted in large scale migration from the Bhojpuri region, which was reeling under economic crisis and destitution, to Mauritius, Fiji and the Caribbean. (also reported by George Grierson on Colonial Migration from Bengal Presidency, 1883).

Male out-migration was not transitory, but a central phenomenon to Bhojpuri lives. This phenomenon still continues wherein a large

number of Bhojpuri male members constitute cheap informal labour in cities across India. Presently, they go not only to metros like Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata but also to other cities like Gujrat and Punjab. Thus, one can say that the above historical landscape of Bhojpuri region is not the days of the past only. In my field study in Bhojpur region, I have seen that most of the male members of the family especially from the lower castes and class have migrated in order to be able to support their families. Most Muslim men have gone to Saudi Arabia to get greater opportunities of work and remuneration whereas Hindu men members have gone to Mumbai, Gujrat, Ludhiana, Punjab and so on. Apart from this, feudal patriarchy and the caste-based hierarchy have also remained a crude reality of the Bihari Society.

Bhojpuri Society and Counterculture

A cursory glance through the 'culture' as it is understood in Bihar would show that there exists a 'Culture' which is used as the medium of profit making tools, or as a means for commercial, capitalist, and consumerist goals. The mainstream popular culture in the name of pleasure often directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously leads to the abuse of women by furthering their act of producing a song or Cinema that is sexist stereotypical, misogynist and insensitive which strengthens the feudal, patriarchal and casteist roots of the society. Here I would like to mention Bourdieu Pierre who says that "cultural tastes are social constructs located in the context of a class-oriented habitus". With regard to the Bhojpuri region, I would argue that culture is both the social and commercial construct. The point I want

to make here is that in this process of commercialisation of culture often, the other side of Bhojpuri cultural sphere remains absent, limited, or out of reach to the larger masses. Bhojpuri culture has come to be ridiculed by outsiders as being obscene and profane and understandably so, going by the popular culture available for mass consumption. This phenomenon of a larger shift in the Bhojpuri culture is not very old. The shift has come in the last two decades with the arrival of deregulated/ unbridled commercial cultural market for the sheer purpose of profit. However, there are also people and groups who are committed to creating/building counter-culture to resist or change the dominant political, economic or social culture based on inequality. Further, we will see that in the process of making and unmaking of culture and counterculture there still remains many more practical difficulties and debates around this particular topic.

Bhojpuri speaking region is the place of phenomenally renowned personalities who are known worldwide for their contribution to the field of culture and literature. It is ironical however, that most of the people of our generation are unaware of a whole section of their own culture.

Asserting Bhojpuri cultural identity

We would like to put Bhojpuri literary writers, poets, and play writer such as Shakespeare of Bhojpuri Bhikhari Thakur, Heera Dom (Dalit poet), Markande Das Bihari Ram, Narayan Mahto (Naxalite poet), Gorakh Pandey, Rahul Sankrityayan, etc. These extraordinary people have played an important role in keeping the Bhojpuri alternative People's culture alive

through their different forms of cultural creation be it poetry, playwriting, or songs depicting the diverse aspects of Bhojpuri people's life and struggle for subsistence and struggle to have a dignified life. The speakers of the language, whose first poet is Kabir, are truth-loving having the courage to break conventions with a habit of fighting the fear of scriptures and illusions of the world and are beyond doubt forever ready to endanger their lives for the protection of their freedom. The people who have tried to understand the Bhojpuri culture and society properly have recognized these features of Bhojpuri consciousness. One such person is the learned scholar Rahul Sankrityayan who has discovered the history of Bhojpuri society and culture and developed its independent identity. Apart from these, there have been many Bhojpuri writers and poets from different political shades, for example, Udaynarayan Tiwari, Bhagwat Sharan Upadhyaya, Vidyanibas Mishra, Bhojpuri story writer Brajkishor, popular poet and play writer Bhikhari Thakur, has written 29 plays like *Videshiya*, *Gabarghichod*, *Beti Bechwa*, *VidhwaVilaap* etc. All of these works interrogate the then socio-economic system of the Bhojpuri region, which is still very much pertinent. Heera Dom brought into being the Dalit discourse in his writings. Gorakh Pandey became the poet of the masses with his caste and class-sensitive issues in his writings and poetry. Having the command over philosophy and politics, he was a dynamic writer and fierce critic of a social and political system based on inequality. 'Swarg se Vidai' is one of his most famous books. Recently two books of Gorakh Pandey came up in public the first is titled "Gorakh Pandey Sankalit Gaddy Rachnayen (2018)" edited by

Gopal Pradhan, and the second one is titled "Gorakh Pandey Samagra Kavitayen 2014". Both were published by 'Jan Sanskriti Manch' and became very popular. These people have raised issues related to the downtrodden and exhibited people's life and struggles in their writings. Krishnadev Upadhyaya in his article "an introduction to the Bhojpuri folk song", I. Srivastava in his article "Women as portrayed in women folk songs of North India", and Badri Narayan in his book "Bhojpuri culture and 1857: A memory against forgetting" have depicted the glory of Bhojpuri folk culture and the voice of resistance in their cultural forms.

Conclusion

This paper sought to understand the new evolving pattern of culture, which is not only defying the traditional cultural pattern but also creating a different culture which is plural and more democratic in nature. Thus, we can say that cultures are formed through a complex dialogue or contestation with other popular culture. Study of culture and counterculture is the most challenging concept in the field of social sciences. Still, we continue to explore all aspects of culture and try to engage and understand it properly.

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UNITED NATIONS : ITS STRUCTURAL EFFORTS FOR PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS

Dr. Rakhi Sinha*

Abstract :

Human rights are basic rights that belong to every human in the world right from birth. To speak of human rights needs a conception that the rights one possess by virtue of being human. The root cause for human rights may be traced to religion, humanitarian traditions and to the growing struggle for freedom and equality in all parts of the world. It is quoted as those rights that are essential for the protection and maintenance of dignity and create condition in which every human can develop its personality to the fullest of its extent. Everyone born in this world have human rights that must be protected by the law. According to United Nations, there are 30 basic human rights that recognized around the world like right to life, liberty, equality, justice etc. It was a mighty and strong leap-forward of human rights. The French Revolution of 1789 also made certain contributions to it. Hence, through this paper I would highlight the efforts of United Nations with the help of its various mechanism, how it works structurally for the protection of human rights in concrete way.

Keywords : Human Rights, Justice, Equality, National security etc.

Evolution of Human Rights

Human rights are basic rights that belong to every human in the world right from birth. To speak of human rights needs a conception that the rights one possess by virtue of being human. The root cause for human rights may be traced to religion, humanitarian traditions and to the growing struggle for freedom and equality in all parts of the world. It is quoted as those rights that are essential for the protection and maintenance of dignity and create condition in which every human can develop its personality to the fullest of its extent. Everyone born in this world have human rights that must be protected by the law. According to United Nations, there are 30 basic Human Rights that recognized around the world like right to life, liberty, equality, justice etc. The first major grant of such rights by a ruler was "Magna Carta" signed willy-nilly by King John of England in 1215 A.D. But the demand for more and more rights in favour of the people as against the ruler was carried on by leaders-secular as well as ecclesiastical all over the civilized world. After about 600 years of Magna Carta, Abraham Lincoln, formally abolished slavery and granted freedom from bondage to the

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wretched slaves. It was a mighty and strong leap-forward of human rights. The French Revolution of 1789 also made certain contributions to it.

The modern human rights law can be called as Post World War II (1945 onwards) phenomenon. The monstrous violation of the human rights during that period and the belief that some of these human rights violations could have been checked out if there had been some effective international system for the protection of human rights. The brutal act done by Hitler (German Dictator) against the Jews (Genocide i.e. the systematic killing of people because of their race and ethnicity) or the dropping of Atom Bombs over the Japanese cities (Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 1945) by the American troops were the most tragic violations of human rights during the war period. Thus in 1945 (after the second World War) the UNO was established as the international organization for maintaining international peace and security as well as the protection and promotion of human rights universally. The United Nations is the prime forum for creating international law that is solely concerned with the states in the classical period. For the first time Human Rights was recognised by the Charter of the United Nations. In other words, the human rights provisions in the UN Charter reflect the reaction of the international community to the horrors of war and the regimes which unleashed it. The UNO through its UDHR (Universal Declaration on Human Rights) of 10th December, 1948 gave it a concrete fillip. The International Bill of human rights recognizes not only human right to life, liberty and security, but also freedom from exploitation, right to privacy as well as other economic, political, social and cultural

rights. The human rights are thus a body of both rules & customs⁹ that are essential for being human to every extent.

Certain Provisions are woven in the UN Charter "like a golden thread" that gives a remarkable space to the Human Rights. Everyone keen to have a very strong provisions in order to provide every human being a comfortable position in the society i.e. "Live and Let Live". Some have affirmed the binding nature and direct enforceability of the Charter provisions, while others have denied it. While denying to them, directly or indirectly, as relevant in the sense that they form part of the public policy of a state as a signatory of the Charter. Certain provisions are:

(a) Preamble :

The Preamble of the UN Charter states "We the peoples of United Nations (are) determined to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity & worth of the human persons, in the equal rights of men & women & of nations large & small". Article 1 reads as follows: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

(b) Purpose of the UNO:

Article 1(3) provides for the underlying purpose of the U.N. i.e., "to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character, & in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights". It calls for no discrimination should be practiced on the basis of sex, race, religion, creed etc. It has sown for days ahead, it has achieved more than might have been expected, less than might have been hoped.

(c) Responsibilities of the General Assembly:

Article 55(c) provides responsibilities to the General Assembly of U.N. to work upon for fulfilling the above mentioned purpose of the U.N. This U.N. machinery is the largest body that includes almost every sovereign nation of the world. It provides an active universal platform for them to come forward with their issues & grievances over human rights. One of the early Acts of the General Assembly was to draft & adopt the UDHRs resolutions 217A of December 1948. During its 60th session, the General Assembly adopted the World Summit Outcome Resolution 60/1 of 16th September 2005 which called, inter alia, for strengthening of the UN's human rights mechanism. The General Assembly has adopted about 80 human rights conventions and declarations since 1948. Human rights are thus a core of everything we do & try to do. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations.

(d) Aims of UN Security Council :

The UN Security Council comprising of 15 members has the primary duty for the promotion and protection of international peace and security. Although, this UN mechanism has not been endowed any specific power in the field of human rights, but in reality, it has become the "centre

piece of the human rights protection system of the international community. It regards human rights violations as a threat to international peace, making it possible to take action against such violations with measures provided in Chapter VII of the UN Charter. It identifies three human rights which have attracted most of its attentions: the right of peoples to self-determination, the right to democratic governance and the fundamental rights (arising under international human rights law and international humanitarian law) of civilian population and minorities during war and internal conflict. It has been responsible for international tribunals to prosecute serious violations of humanitarian laws. For example, special tribunals have been set up to prosecute law crimes in Former Yugoslavia and acts of genocide in Rwanda.

The Security Council has increased attention to atrocity, crimes such as genocide, crimes against humanity, major war crimes and ethnic cleansing laws which is a combination of human rights humanitarian and criminal law. In the meantime, some changes might be institutionalised. The relevant UN officials should always be invited to address the Security Council such as United Nations High Commissioner on human rights, UNHCR on Refugees, the UN Coordinator on humanitarian affairs or the President of the UN Human Rights Council. Secondly, when approving an enforcement action, it should always create a follow-on supervising committee to report back to it about fidelity to and progress in

implementing the mandate. The idea of human rights has a force of its own which government can never extinguish.

(e) Objective of International Economic & Social Cooperation:

Article 13(2) set out in Chapter IX & X aims at to create a condition of stability & well-being for having a peaceful & friendly relation among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights & self-determination of the people. Similarly, Article 55 & 56 bind member States to observe & respect human rights. From time to time, the UN International Court of Justice use to give its advisory opinions in many matters.

(f) Functions of UN Economic & Social Council:

Article 62(2) empowers ECOSOC to make recommendations for the purpose of promoting respect for, & the obligations of human rights & fundamental freedom for all. Article 68 empowers ECOSOC regarding setting up a Commission for the promotion of human rights. & such other commissions as may be required for the performance of its functions.

Other structural mechanisms —

Individual complaints:

The provision for Individual complaints can also be entertained by the Treaty Bodies. Few UN mechanisms are authorized enough to deal with those complaints under reasonable limitations. An individual might get few relaxations by going through complicated procedures. In fact, Human Rights must be enjoyed without any restrictions. It is one of the best mechanistic tool of this Global body. Through ratifications of international human

rights treaties, the government undertake to put into place domestic measures and legislation as well as duties. The domestic legal system, therefore provides the principle legal protection guaranteed under international law. Where it fails to address human rights abuses, mechanisms and procedure for individual complaints or communications are available at the regional and international levels to help ensure that international human rights standards are indeed respected, implemented and enforced at the local levels.

United Nations Human Rights Commission:

It is staffed by about 900 international civil servants who work on a wide range of human rights activities. There are currently about seven treaty bodies of international experts who monitor state party's compliance with the core international human rights treaties and conventions. Made up of 15 member states (earlier it was 18) elected by ECOSOC for three years' terms & meets for six weeks annually. It was formed under Resolution 1237(XLII). It considers the entire UN human rights program through the mechanism of examining, discussing, fact-finding missions & setting priorities on a wide range of Human Rights institutions & bodies. For its help, it can create subsidiary bodies & mechanisms that could meet regularly. In fact, during its inception in 1946, it was decided to not to look into communications about individual human rights abuses. But much has changed now at varying degrees into a structure of legally binding treaties. Special investigators and mechanisms has been built up to hold countries to commitments to respect the human rights of their citizens and be accountable for their actions. Six major human rights treaties have been negotiated namely civil and political rights, economic

and social rights²¹, racial discrimination, discrimination against women, torture & rights of the child. Almost all countries have ratified these six treaties. Since 1980, the Commission has created a number of "Special Procedures" to look into violations of human rights on an urgent basis, conduct country investigations and report publically on their findings ratified by experts appointed on the basis of their merit and calibre. There are certain "Independent experts" also. The Special Procedures experts takes action on certain "thematic" human rights violations and the Independent experts serve as "Country special rapporteurs".

Human Rights Council:

The world leaders- Heads of states and governments met at UNO's Headquarters from September 14-16, 2005 and adopted a document at the end of the summit known as 2005 World Summit Outcome. It contains a number of global issues that are responsible for the protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The General Assembly on March 15, 2006 adopted a resolution to establish the Human Rights Council, based in Geneva, in replacement of the Commission of Human Rights. The Council shall be the main inter-governmental body for human rights in the UN system. It consists of 47 members that are elected directly and individually by secret ballot by the majority of the members of the General Assembly. They serve for the period of six years and are not eligible for immediate re-election. Its main functions are to promote human rights education and learning, give advisory opinion, serve as a forum for dialogue on thematic issues on human rights, undertake periodic reviews and submit annual report to General Assembly. It

shall assume the role and responsibility of the Commission on Human Rights to the work of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Universal Periodic Review :

On June 18, 2007, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution which established the Universal Periodic Review. It is a unique process which involves a review of the human rights records of all UN members once in every four years. Thus around forty-eight states will be reviewed every year. It aims at the over-all study and condition of human rights in particular states. It will examine the reports submitted to it and also provide technical support. The reviews are conducted by the Universal Periodic Review Working Groups consisting of around 47 members. The government of Iran undertook its first UPR on 15th February 2010. Out of 189 recommendations, it accepted around 123 recommendations.

Conclusion :

Hence, human rights are the core of the UN's identify. Human rights remain the central pillar of UNO for the coming century. Indeed, they lie right at the heart of our multi-lateral endeavours. They need it to be their ally and protector. No doubt, the world political situation does not allow for much concerted human rights activism, in the field. Doctrines of national security and sovereignty are often invoked to conceal, excuse or justify human rights abuses. Extreme poverty and exclusion from economic, political and cultural life continue to be the fate of millions in both developing and developed countries. Definitely, the United Nations Organization is a saviour of the Human Rights. But without respect for

the dignity and worth of all members of the human family, any effort cannot possibly succeed.

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REVIEW OF PERRY ANDERSON'S AFTER NEHRU

Dr. Laxmi Kumari*

Perry Anderson's *After Nehru* is review of the functional aspect of the Indian politics, especially after Nehru's ascendance to prime ministership, from an outsider's vantage point. All three organs of the government- Executive, Legislature and Judiciary are included in the ambit of his analysis. Again, he discusses how have the Nehruvian Consensus i.e., Democracy, Socialism, Secularism and Federalism found their way practically in the Indian politics.

He begins with the point (like Pratap Bhanu Mehta used the term 50% democracy) that the Indian politics is not that democratic and liberal as is theoretically and ideally claimed. He takes the example of representation. The Constituent Assembly that gave India its constitution was a British-created body dating from 1946, for which only one out of seven of the subjects of the Raj had been allowed to vote. No election on an expanded franchise was held till 1951. For twenty years, across five polls between 1951 and 1971, Congress never won a majority of votes. In this period, at the peak of its popularity as an organisation, its average share of the electorate was 45 per cent. This yielded it crushing majorities in the Lok Sabha, amounting to just below 70 per cent of the seats in Parliament. Also, by 1987 there had been no fewer than 75 of these takeovers by the centre (president's rule), affecting virtually every state in India. Thus, the representative institutions of Indian democracy were thus from the start anchored in a system of electoral distortion, and armour-plated with an ample repertoire of legal repression.

The priorities of Nehru's regime were industrial development and military spending, rather than bridging socio-economic gap. A great faith was instilled in the Trickle down theory. No land reform worthy of mention was attempted. No income tax was introduced until 1961. Primary education was grossly neglected. As a party, Congress was controlled by a coalition of rich farmers, traders and urban professionals.

A major factor responsible for such a devastating inequality present in India is social stratification. Structurally, by reason of their smaller numbers and greater resources, virtually all ruling classes enjoy an advantage over the ruled in their capacity of collective action. More numerous and more dispersed, less equipped materially, less armed culturally, subordinate classes always tend, in sociologist Michael Mann's phrase, to be "organisationally outflanked" by those above them. Nowhere has this condition been more extreme than in India. Later on,

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identity (caste, language etc.) was learnt to be furthered for educational, employment and political gain. There the country is divided into some thirty major linguistic groups.

In the similar way, secularism has been manipulated as per the convenience. In the struggle for independence, the legitimating ideology of Congress had always been a secular nationalism. The constitution it adopted did not, however, describe India as a secular state, a term that that was avoided. Nor did it institute equality before the law, a principle also eschewed. There would be no uniform code: Hindus and Muslims would continue to be subject to the respective customs of their faith governing family life. Protection of cows and prohibition of alcohol were enjoined, and seats reserved in Parliament for two minorities, Scheduled Castes (Untouchables) and Tribes, but not Muslims. In mechanics such as these, Indian secularism is Hindu confessionalism by another name. An unfortunate resultant of mishandling the matter of minorities is that the three great insurgencies against the Indian state have come in Kashmir, Nagaland-Mizoram and Punjab-regions respectively Muslim, Christian and Sikh.

Another ideal that is, federalism is not prevalent in India in true sense. Constitution drafters studiously avoided the word "federal". The Upper House in Delhi would be not even the weak shadow of a senate. The new state would be an Indian Union, with powers conferred on the centre to manipulate or overthrow elected authorities in its constituent units unthinkable in the United States, Canada, Australia or other models consulted for its construction. But though less than federal in intention, in outcome the union became something like a creatively flexible

federation, in which state governments came to enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy, so long as they did not offer opportunities for intervention by internal disputes or cross too boldly the political will of the centre. The feature of the centre has been like state of emergency in the periphery, dictatorship of the centre. India has escaped the latter. But it has exhibited the former, with a vengeance. For example, it is now 65 years since Congress seized the larger part of Kashmir almost undemocratically. The ease with which the National Conference was manipulated to Indian ends, as Abdullah was discarded for Bakshi, and Bakshi for Sadiq, made it clear how relatively shallow an organisation it had, despite appearances, always been. Similarly, the North-East is a fertile land for conflict because of repressive handling by the Centre, especially the Congress under Nehru. The AFSPA enacted in 1958 is reason of hatred here. POTA, TADA etc are some other examples of repressive laws. Foreign relations, too, were conducted in the way Nehru thought they should be. There was little space for discussion. For example, he went for the slogan 'Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai' while reality was something else.

Still, it can be argued that such failings were trifling set beside one commanding achievement. Nehru's greatness, it is generally felt, was to rule as a democrat in a non-Western world teeming with dictators. The larger truth, however, is that Nehru could be the democratic ruler he was because once in office he faced so little opposition. There was 'one-party democracy'.

Two biggest national parties i.e., Congress and BJP without support of either of which it is generally not possible to form a government at the Centre, but are not able to form a

government on their own due to shrinking of their support base. Coalition with an array of regional parties has become a requirement of rule at the Centre. With it has come a large measure of convergence between Congress and the BJP in government, each pursuing at home a neoliberal economic agenda, as far as their allies will allow them, and abroad a strategic rapprochement with the United States. Both parties are marked with nepotism and further crony capitalism. Coalgate is a remarkable example in this context which apparently involves both parties. It has been felt that leaders and the steel frame i.e., bureaucracy are increasingly proving to be blockades in the path of development.

Among so many degenerative symptoms in the executive and legislatures alike, one antibody in the constitution has stood out. The Supreme Court, guardian of the constitution, has become the principal

breakwater in India against threats to liberty, abuses of power and theft of public goods. In two landmark changes, the court has made it more difficult for the centre to overturn elected governments in the regions by imposing presidential rule, and has started to accept 'public interest litigation', allowing ordinary citizens and associations in civil society to bring suits before it against public authorities. Also, judicial activism is a great innovation without precedent in any other country.

The tidal wave of Corruption mars the development and is an increasing tendency unleashed as a by-product of the neoliberal turn of the state since the 1990s. Poor public remain divided and though new middle class has turned against mega-corruption, but is scarcely foreign to the bribe and the wink, let alone favours to kin, at its own level of advantage. Corruption and remaining of red-tapism are still prevalent in the bureaucracy.





MYTH AND REALITY OF DIGITAL SOLUTION FOR GOVERNANCE

Vikram Prashant*

Abstract :

As society transforms from simple to complex, the role of Governance has also changed. In traditional society, the role of government is limited to tax collection and maintenance of law and order. But in modern society, people's demand is growing, and this growing demand expands the role of government beyond tax collection. The role of government changes from a regulator to an enabler.

The changing nature of society is manifested in the complexity of problems and finding solutions. We look towards digital technology. It increases our dependence on technology. We are only able to see the solution in digital technology. It captures our creativity, and for simple to complex problems, we want a solution in either a "Web Portal" or an "APP". This tendency has also been seen in the government recently, and Governance has become synonymous with forming a web portal and creating an "APP".

Digital Governance is a framework for establishing accountability, roles, and decision-making authority for organizations' digital presence- websites, mobile sites, social channels, and other Internet and web-enabled products and services. Hence, this paper intends to study the Myth and reality of digital solutions provided by the government to fulfil the demands of its citizens. So many apps have been developed to solve similar problems. Leverage by so many APP and Web Portals creates confusion in the minds of citizens, and instead of providing a solution, it becomes a problem in itself. This article also found that a digital solution only answers some governance problems, especially in developing countries like India, where many challenges are faced regarding digital availability and security.

Keywords : Governance, Digital solution, Digital India, E-Government, Good Governance, Red-tapes, E-governance, app, Web Portal, WhatsApp, Facebook.

Introduction :

Digital government and Digital governance are used interchangeably. Digital or E-Government refers primarily to providing information and online services to citizens in a state by the government. On the other hand, Digital Governance or E-Government focuses on the public's participation and their role as citizens. Digital Governance means providing government services to citizens based on the Internet. Traditionally, citizens must physically go to the government office to get any service. However, in the era of digital Governance, there is no need to go

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to the government office. However, these internet portals, in the form of websites and apps, are in addition to and are different from traditional brick-and-mortar offices. Citizens, through online portals or apps, can avail of all government services. According to West in Digital Governance, under E-Government, the delivery of information and services online through the Internet or other digital means is ensured.

Digital Governance can also be defined as the application of electronic means in the interaction between government and citizens and government and businesses, as well as in internal government operations to simplify and improve democratic, government and business aspects of Governance.

Digital Governance is a more transparent, accountable form of government. People only face bureaucratic hurdles when availing of government services if they know how to use the Internet. It reduces the distance between the electorate and the executive after being elected. It enables citizens to be more participative in government functioning. "Mygov" is an Indian government portal that connects its citizens. It is a platform for citizen engagement toward good Governance. It is a common platform for Indian citizens to crowdsource governance ideas from citizens. Its user discusses and contributes to various government projects and plans.

Models of Digital Governance

There are a few basic theoretical models of Digital Governance that may serve as a guide to making this idea a reality. Two characteristics of the new technologies remain the same in these models. The first is that these models of Digital Governance enable equal access to information to anyone

who is linked to the digital network, and the second is the de-concentration of information across the entire digital network.

- Broadcasting/Wider-Dissemination Model
- Critical Flow Model
- Comparative Analysis Model
- E-Advocacy/Lobbying and Pressure Group Model
- Interactive-Service Model

Aims, objectives and utility of Digital Governance

- i. Satisfying the Citizens
- ii. Digital Governance as Processes and Interactions
- iii. Digital Governance as a Major Tool for Government
- iv. Democratization
- v. Environmental Benefits
- vi. Express Service Delivery with Convenience
- vii. Public Approval
- viii. Government Transparency
- ix. Simplifying Processes

The importance and benefits of digitizing the public sector using digital technologies as an integrated part of its service delivery mechanism cannot be overemphasized. Besides improving Governance through greater transparency and accountability of government functionaries, it helps governments ensure efficient and effective provision of services at a fraction of the costs incurred by providing the same services through traditional means. Creating an open, participatory, and trustworthy public sector also helps improve socio-economic

inclusiveness, which is essential for long-term sustainable growth.

Objective :

Digital Governance is composed of three elements: e-government, e-regulation, and e-democracy. The objective of this paper is to identify the Myths and realities associated with digital solutions or Digital governance.

Methodology :

The primary method of research was to search the Internet and review peer-reviewed scholarly articles and papers to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.

Myth and reality Associated with Digital solution

Digital Governance has immense potential to transform government workings and ensure people's participation in government functioning. However, the mere formation of a Web Portal or the creation of an app does not guarantee the excellent Governance expected from digital Governance.

The following myths are associated with digital solutions—

1. The creation of web portals and apps is in itself a solution.

Digital solutions provided by the government without considering economic, social, and educational reality indicate the Myth associated with Digital Solutions. Especially during the coronavirus pandemic, the government of India has developed many digital initiatives, like the "Manodarpan" initiative. It is an MHRD initiative for students' mental health and counselling (Manodarpan Portal). There needs to be more than the mere creation of the Manodarpan portal for the well-being of students.

Similarly, digital initiatives for Online Education are ineffective in India's deep digital divide. According to the Annual Status of Education Report 2020, only one-third of India's school children are pursuing online Education, and a smaller cohort of this, 32.5%, are doing live online classes. While just 11% of all the students enrolled in private and government schools were using online classes, another 21.5% used videos or recorded classes. Moreover, if you take the government school children alone, only 8.1% of enrolled children were using online classes nationwide.

The report further said that although a lot of digital content has been generated and transmitted to help children continue to learn, there is limited evidence on the extent to which this content is reaching children, whether they are engaging with it, and the impact it is having on their participation and learning.

The mere creation of a web portal and app is not digital Governance. It is only a means to connect people to Governance, but it is not an end in itself.

2. The penetration of Smartphones is a sufficient condition for digital Governance.

Increasing penetration of Smartphones has the potential to become the digital infrastructure for digital Governance. Many government services can be provided through Smartphones easily. It is a myth that if a person knows how to operate a Smartphone and can open YOUTUBE on their phone, it means enough to get any government service through mobile. Using a smartphone to watch YouTube,

WhatsApp, and Facebook does not indicate that people can avail themselves of digital Governance. Smartphones can become an asset for digital Governance if government web portals and apps associated with digital Governance are as easy to use as YOUTUBE and WhatsApp. Suppose even illiterate people can use web portals or Smartphones and have some digital literacy. In that case, the increase in smartphone use is a positive sign for digital solutions. However, at present time, both conditions are different for India. No Indian government web portal is on the world user-friendly web portals list. Moreover, about 90 per cent of the Indian population is digitally illiterate. As per a report from the Digital Empowerment Foundation in 2018, around 90% of India's population is digitally illiterate.

Thus, it is a myth that increasing the number of smartphones only indicates a favourable condition for digital Governance. Digital Governance is about more than just increasing Internet and mobile use because if we continuously push towards digital solutions for every problem, it creates only Digital Poverty. Digital Poverty has been defined as a new concept of poverty, meaning the inability to access and benefit from information and communications technology services due to a lack of access and skills required to access these services.

3. Digital Governance is only about the use of the clout of new technology:

Although Digital governance is about efficiently utilizing the power of new technology like satellite technology, GPS,

computers, the Internet, mobile devices, biometrics, etc., it is also very much about how the information collected is utilized to better cater to the needs of citizens.

The information collected should clarify the objective setting in ICT terms (computers, networks, etc.), the process outcomes, and the measurements post-implementation.

Information should be used for data mining, supporting management decisions, and not merely for word processing.

By knowing the value of information and its foundation, information can be improved, providing better support in decision-making and better assessment. Mere use of the clout of new technology is not Digital Governance. It is much about the grave importance of the use value of information.

The focus of Digital governance should not only be limited to efficiently utilizing new technologies but should also be oriented toward ensuring good Governance using the information gathered.

4. Citizens are considered to be empowered consumers.

The image of an intelligent citizen who uses the possibilities of the Internet in optima forma to improve his or her position as a consumer of government services is dominant. It is assumed that citizens will demand a public administration that also uses the possibilities of the Internet in optima forma, a public administration that enables them to act as empowered and intelligent citizens. These assumptions about the role of the citizen and government are not without risk.

The citizen is portrayed as an intelligent and 'empowered' consumer, while the government is presented primarily as a service organization. However, citizens are more than consumers; they should be allowed and encouraged to speak and participate in the democratic process. The notion of the Omni-rational consumer (who knows his preferences, can master both bureaucratic and ICT skills and actively engages in conversation with government agencies) should be redefined, and attention should be paid to the increased social polarization in a society with ICT winners and ICT losers. The use of ICT to support the citizen's personal development and to allow individuals to exercise their influence to speak up: "Individuals must, themselves, demonstrate their constructive interest in the potential of the info-society and avail themselves of opportunities in the educational system, public libraries.

The improvement of the quality of public service delivery paradoxically does not increase the legitimacy of government; instead, addressing citizens as consumers and defining government as a production company ignores the public and political character of service delivery. A focus on service delivery (and on the consumer rather than on the citizen) narrows the multi-dimensionality of citizenship and public administration and may decrease legitimacy. The challenge for digital government is to develop participative forms of electronic service delivery and to address citizens simultaneously as their identities as consumers, voters and Good citizens.

5. A New and Better Government

ICTs are seen as helping the realization, with little effort, of administrative machinery that is responsive, client-oriented and cohesive. Digital government is seen as having only one purpose: to make life better for citizens and businesses. The focus on improving electronic service delivery assumes it will deliver what people want, fully exploiting the government's information resources. New technology offers the possibility of making access to information about the government more accessible. The digital age also offers the possibility of a better informed and more participative democracy through electronic consultation and better responses to feedback. In 'Transformational Government', the promise of a new and better government is stretched further as the specific opportunities lie in improving transactional services, helping front-line public servants to be more effective, supporting effective policy outcomes, and reforming the corporate services and infrastructure, which the government uses behind the scenes.

In practice, the goal of integrated electronic service delivery-especially about contact and transaction services leads to profound integration and coordination problems. Integrated service delivery implies that several back offices should work together to handle questions, requests, etc. They need to share information and knowledge across internal and external organizational boundaries. In essence, the exchange and sharing of information and knowledge between these

back offices implies the integration of several information domains, each with its legal framework, information systems, data definitions, routines and procedures, expertise and experience, and its own frames of reference. Thus, ICT is not only a source of innovation but also a source of resistance, or even what is referred to as a 'battle of the back offices'. The most critical impediments to integration are coordination problems due to an ambiguous distribution of tasks and legally defined competencies among the back offices. While these offices should be working together, the plurality of the actors and interests at stake and the lack of a shared vision or sense of urgency about the necessity to work together prevent cooperation.

Similarly, a focus on service delivery structures instead of a focus on the service delivery processes or the incompatible data systems and definitions prevents the desired integration. Remarkably, suppose the integration problems of the back offices are addressed in various e-government policy documents. In that case, it is primarily and predominantly articulated as a technical problem for which a technical solution exists. It is rarely seen as a problem of institutional design, that is, in terms of actors, their interests, their power bases and resources, their relationships and their strategies, conflict and compromises.

Conclusion :

The belief that Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) serve as a universal remedy for global issues is tempting.

However, it needs to acknowledge the complex realities of their implementation. The efficacy of ICTs is not merely about the deployment of technology but also about its integration within the specific socio-political contexts of different nations. While ICTs hold transformative potential, their impact is significantly influenced by a country's underlying institutional and political forces. Therefore, a nuanced approach is essential, recognising that technology is not a panacea but a tool that needs to be carefully adapted and integrated.

The premise that technology amplifies existing institutional dynamics underscores the importance of accompanying technological advancements with substantial policy and institutional reforms. The role of ICTs should not be seen in isolation but as part of a broader ecosystem where they interact with existing structures and processes. This interaction can either enhance or undermine the potential benefits of technology, depending on the nature of those institutional forces. Consequently, the success of ICT initiatives is contingent upon the alignment and synergy between technology, policy, and institutional frameworks.

The call for more research into the effectiveness of multimillion-dollar government and ICT development projects recognises the need for evidence-based approaches in this domain. There is a growing realisation that while ICT projects are often heralded for their transformative potential, there needs to be more understanding of their actual impact, particularly regarding equitable benefits. The case of India, where the technological revolution has predominantly advantaged the

already privileged sectors, exemplifies the disparities that can emerge without inclusive strategies.

Addressing the digital divide is critical to leveraging ICTs for broader societal benefits. The divide pertains to access to technology and the capability to use it effectively. Bridging this gap requires comprehensive strategies beyond technology provision, including education, skill development, and institutional support, ensuring that all citizens, irrespective of their socio-economic status, can benefit from digital advancements.

The development of a national approach to risk management, particularly concerning digital security and privacy, acknowledges the new challenges posed by the digital age. The integration of clear economic rationales, result monitoring, and establishing a robust legal and regulatory framework are pivotal in harnessing the benefits of e-government initiatives while mitigating associated risks.

Finally, the emphasis on inclusive participation in policy development and the provision of public electronic services highlights the need for a collaborative approach. Engaging state, private, and public entities in these processes harness diverse perspectives and expertise, leading to more resilient and effective ICT strategies.

In summary, while ICTs offer immense potential for addressing various global challenges, their success is intricately linked to the broader socio-political and institutional contexts in which they are deployed. A holistic and inclusive approach, emphasising policy coherence, institutional alignment, and stakeholder engagement, is crucial for realising the full potential of ICTs in fostering sustainable and equitable development.

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EXPLORING ROLE OF THE INDIAN DIASPORA IN INDIA-USA RELATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY

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Abstract :

The relationship between India and the United States in the 21st century has undergone significant transformations, reflecting the changing geopolitical landscape and the evolving priorities of both nations. This multifaceted partnership has encompassed diplomatic, economic, strategic, and cultural dimensions, shaping global dynamics in the process. The purpose of this paper is to analyse the evolving relation of India and USA in 21st Century.

Keywords : Indo-USA Relation, Indian Diaspora, Indentured labour, Economic Factor

Introduction:

India and the United States have strengthened their diplomatic ties over the years, marked by high-level visits and collaborative initiatives. The Indo-U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement in 2008 was a landmark development, symbolizing a departure from historical Cold War-era tensions. Both countries have engaged in dialogues on regional and global issues, fostering a sense of cooperation in addressing common challenges, including climate change, counterterrorism, and public health.

Economic Partnership:

Economic ties between India and the U.S. have expanded significantly in the 21st century. Trade volumes have surged, and both nations have sought to enhance economic cooperation through initiatives such as the U.S.-India Strategic and Partnership Forum. The growth of the technology sector has been a key driver, with Indian professionals playing pivotal roles in the U.S. tech industry. However, trade imbalances, intellectual property concerns, and market access issues have also been points of contention.

Strategic Collaboration :

Strategic cooperation has become a cornerstone of the India-U.S. relationship, marked by shared concerns over regional stability and security. Both countries have participated in joint military exercises, intelligence-sharing arrangements, and discussions on maritime security. The signing of the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 and the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) in 2018 exemplify the deepening defence ties.

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Technology and Innovation :

The 21st century has witnessed increased collaboration in the field of technology and innovation. The U.S.-India Science and Technology Endowment Fund and the U.S.-India Innovation Forum have facilitated joint research and development initiatives. The technology sector has been a driving force, with Indian IT companies contributing significantly to the U.S. economy, although issues related to visa restrictions and protectionist policies have occasionally strained this aspect of the relationship.

Cultural and People-to-People Ties :

Cultural exchanges and people-to-people ties have played a pivotal role in fostering mutual understanding and goodwill. The Indian Diaspora in the U.S. has grown substantially, contributing to the multicultural fabric of American society. The celebration of Indian festivals, promotion of yoga, and the popularity of Indian cuisine have all contributed to a deeper appreciation of Indian culture in the U.S., fostering a sense of shared values. Establishing the significance of the Indian Diaspora in the global context and its historical role in shaping India-USA relations highlighted the focus on Diaspora diplomacy in contemporary international relations. Exploring the role of the Indian Diaspora in India-USA relations in the 21st century involves a multifaceted examination of their impact on various aspects such as economic ties, cultural exchange, and political influence.

Indian Diaspora Trend Analysis

The Indian Diaspora is a vast and diverse community spread across the globe, shaped by historical migrations, economic opportunities, and cultural exchanges.

Examining this phenomenon involves exploring various hypotheses that seek to understand the reasons behind the dispersal of people of Indian origin and the impact of their presence in host countries. One reason of migration centres on historical migration patterns, particularly during the British colonial era. The forced movement of Indians as indentured labourers to various parts of the world, such as Southeast Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, laid the foundation for a dispersed Indian Diaspora. The indenture system was a response to labour shortages and economic needs in British colonies, contributing to the establishment of Indian communities in distant lands.

Another reason of migration emphasizes economic factors as a driving force behind Indian Diaspora. The search for better economic prospectives have led many Indians to migrate to developed countries in North America (especially in USA), Europe, and the Middle East. The lure of job opportunities, higher education, and entrepreneurial ventures has played a pivotal role in shaping the demographic landscape of the Indian Diaspora in these regions.

Cultural factors also play a significant role in understanding the Diaspora. The spread of Indian culture through the global popularity of Bollywood, Indian cuisine, and traditional practices has created a sense of shared identity among Indians abroad. This cultural connection fosters a strong sense of community and helps maintain ties with the homeland, influencing the dynamics of the Indian Diaspora.

Furthermore, the trend of Diaspora as a bridge for global connections suggests that the Indian Diaspora serves as a crucial link

between India and the rest of the world. Through business networks, academic collaborations, and cultural exchanges, individuals of Indian origin contribute to fostering international relations and enhancing India's global influence.

The impact of the Indian Diaspora on host countries is another intriguing aspect. The Diaspora contributes to multiculturalism and diversity posits that the presence of Indian communities enriches the cultural tapestry of their adopted nations. This diversity, in turn, can lead to social integration and the blending of traditions, creating a more vibrant and inclusive society. This trend analysis provides insights into the multifaceted nature of Indian migration and its impact on both the homeland and host countries. The Diaspora continues to evolve, it remains a dynamic force influencing global interconnectedness and shaping the narrative of the Indian experience beyond national borders.

Political Influence of Diaspora:

The Indian Diaspora has gradually gained political prominence in the USA, with several members actively participating in politics and policymaking. This increased representation has amplified the Diaspora's voice, allowing them to advocate for policies that benefit both India and the USA. The influence of Indian-Americans in shaping opinions and policies underscores the Diaspora's pivotal role in strengthening bilateral relations. Investigating the economic, technological, and cultural contributions of the Indian Diaspora to both India and the USA led us to know how these contributions have fostered stronger ties and influenced policy decisions.

Strategic Relationship :

The strategic calculus of both India and the U.S. in the Indo-Pacific region has been a critical aspect of their relationship. Both nations share concerns about China's growing influence and have sought to enhance regional stability through initiatives like the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue). However, balancing regional partnerships and ensuring inclusive strategies have been ongoing considerations.

Changes in leadership in both countries have influenced the trajectory of the relationship. The administrations of Presidents George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump, and Joe Biden have each brought distinct priorities and approaches. While continuity in certain aspects has been evident, shifts in emphasis on issues like climate change and multilateralism have occurred.

Economic Ties :

The Indian Diaspora has played a crucial role in strengthening economic relations between India and the USA. With a significant presence in the technology and business sectors, Indian professionals and entrepreneurs have fostered innovation and contributed to the growth of both economies. Their role in establishing and expanding businesses has facilitated trade and investment, creating a mutually beneficial economic partnership.

Diaspora Diplomacy:

Examining the role of Diaspora diplomacy in shaping the foreign policies of India and the USA has shown how the Diaspora acts as a bridge between the two nations, fostering understanding and cooperation. Diaspora diplomacy has emerged as a significant factor in India-USA relations. Indian expatriates often act as cultural ambassadors and bridge the

gap between the two nations, fostering goodwill and understanding. Their networks and connections contribute to people-to-people diplomacy, facilitating communication and collaboration at various levels.

Cultural Exchange :

Cultural ties between India and the USA have been enriched by the Indian Diaspora. Their vibrant cultural contributions, including festivals, music, dance, and cuisine, have not only preserved the rich heritage of India but also promoted cross-cultural understanding. This cultural exchange has deepened the bond between the two nations, fostering a sense of unity and appreciation for diversity.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Identifying challenges faced by the Indian Diaspora in navigating the complex terrain of international relations brings to assess the opportunities for enhanced collaboration and mutual benefit. While the Indian Diaspora has made substantial contributions, challenges exist. Striking a balance between preserving cultural identity and integrating into the adopted country poses a continuous challenge. Additionally, addressing issues like immigration policies and stereotypes is crucial to ensuring the Diaspora's full potential is realized. Despite the positive developments, the India-U.S. relationship has faced challenges. Trade tensions, differing approaches to geopolitical issues (such as Iran and Russia), and occasional disagreements on issues like intellectual property rights have tested the resilience of the partnership. Additionally, historical mistrust and divergent geopolitical interests in the region have required careful diplomacy to manage.

Conclusion :

Looking ahead, the Indian Diaspora is poised to continue shaping India-USA relations in the 21st century. The technology facilitates global connectivity, the Diaspora's role in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship will likely expand. Strengthening educational and research collaborations, along with sustained efforts in cultural exchange, can further solidify the enduring bond between the two nations.

The 21st century progresses, the India-U.S. relationship is poised to play a crucial role in shaping global affairs. Shared democratic values, economic inter-dependence, and converging strategic interests are likely to drive continued collaboration. Managing challenges, fostering innovation, and addressing global issues collectively will be essential for this partnership to reach its full potential in the coming decades. In conclusion, the Indian Diaspora's multifaceted contributions to economic, cultural, and political aspects have been instrumental in shaping India-USA relations in the 21st century. Its dynamic role as a bridge between the two nations underscores the significance of Diaspora engagement in fostering a robust and mutually beneficial partnership.

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INTEGRATING AI AND HUMAN VALUES IN HIGHER EDUCATION : NAVIGATING REALITY AND MYTH

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Abstract :

In an era where artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly intertwined with all facets of society, integrating AI and human values in higher education is a pivotal arena for exploration. This paper delves into the nuanced interplay between AI technologies and the foundational human values that underpin higher education, challenging conventional narratives and demystifying myths surrounding this integration. We examine how AI can augment the educational experience, personalise learning, and offer profound insights into student engagement and success while underscoring the importance of embedding ethical considerations and humanistic values in these systems. By navigating the intricate dynamics between AI advancements and the essence of human learning and interaction, this study aims to shed light on how higher education can serve as a crucible for nurturing a balanced coexistence of technology and humanity. Through a multidisciplinary lens, we propose frameworks and strategies for educators, technologists, and policymakers to collaboratively cultivate an educational ecosystem where AI enhances rather than diminishes the human aspects of learning, fostering an environment where technology and human values synergistically advance the mission of higher education.

Keywords : Artificial Intelligence, Casting, Curriculum pacing, Learning efficacy, Human values, Higher education, Administrative efficiency, Data security, Collaborative design.

Introduction :

In the ever-evolving realm of higher education, a new protagonist emerges on the stage: Artificial Intelligence (AI), a force so transformative that it is redrawing the very blueprint of learning, teaching, and scholarly inquiry. This is a world where AI is not just a silent observer but an active participant, weaving itself into the fabric of academic life, offering a kaleidoscope of opportunities while presenting a labyrinth of challenges. "Integrating AI and Human Values in Higher Education: Navigating Reality and Myth" is not just an article; it is an odyssey that seeks to peel back the layers of AI's integration, casting light on the truths and dispelling the shadows of myth around AI's role in the academic future.

At the core of this voyage lies the intricate dance between AI and the cherished human values that form the bedrock of the educational ethos. This narrative extends beyond the nuts and

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bolts of AI's technical implementation, plunging into the profound ethical, philosophical, and societal questions accompanying AI's march into academia. We are charting a course through unknown waters, grappling with pivotal questions: How does AI serve the human-centric mission of higher education? In what ways could AI either uphold or unsettle the cherished principles we hold dear in the halls of learning?

With a keen eye and a thoughtful approach, this article aspires to shed light on how AI can be leveraged to enrich the educational odyssey, creating more inclusive, tailored, and empowering spaces. However, it does not shy away from the ethical conundrums and potential pitfalls that trail in AI's wake, advocating for a harmonious balance where technological ingenuity aligns with timeless human values. Standing at the juncture of a new educational paradigm, "Integrating AI and Human Values in Higher Education: Navigating Reality and Myth" extends an invitation to educators, students, policymakers, and tech aficionados to partake in a pivotal dialogue about sculpting our future at the confluence of AI and human values within the hallowed halls of higher education.

I. The Promise of AI in Higher Education

A. Personalised Learning : AI's prowess in passing through expansive datasets in higher education shines brightly, offering a beacon of hope for personalised education. This technology tailors learning experiences to individual students, acknowledging that each learner's journey is unique. By discerning patterns in a student's interaction with the material, AI can adapt curriculum pacing, difficulty,

and teaching methods, aligning them with the learner's pace, preferences, and learning style. Such personalisation bolsters engagement and elevates learning efficacy, potentially transforming a monolithic educational structure into a mosaic of individualised learning journeys.

B. Administrative Efficiency : Beyond the classroom, AI extends its hand to streamline cumbersome administrative duties. From the intricacies of admission procedures to the meticulous task of grading, AI systems can automate and refine these processes, liberating educators from the shackles of paperwork and procedural tedium. This newfound freedom allows educators to invest their energies where it matters most: mentoring, teaching, and crafting rich, engaging educational experiences. The ripple effects of this efficiency could enhance resource allocation, elevate educational standards, and foster an environment where quality and innovation thrive.

C. Accessibility and Democratization of Education : AI's reach extends to the noble cause of making education more inclusive. For students with disabilities or those tethered by geographical constraints, AI-enabled tools can break down barriers, offering adaptive and accessible learning modalities. Furthermore, AI's scalability is a crucial ally in democratising education, striving to ensure that high-quality education is not a privilege of the few but a universal right. This technology promises to level the educational playing field, making learning experiences rich, accessible, and tailored to every student's needs.

II. Ethical Considerations and Human Values

- A. Bias and Fairness :** However, the voyage into AI-enhanced education has its storms. AI bias, an echo of its training data, poses a formidable ethical dilemma. If not vigilantly monitored and corrected, AI systems could inadvertently perpetuate existing biases, amplifying disparities instead of alleviating them. Ensuring fairness in AI necessitates a conscientious approach to its design and deployment, ensuring that the systems are as unbiased and equitable as possible and that their training data reflects diverse perspectives and experiences.
- B. Privacy and Data Security :** In the engine room of AI-driven education lies the handling of vast quantities of personal data, the lifeblood of personalised learning. The stewardship of this data carries immense responsibility, as it necessitates safeguarding student privacy and ensuring robust data security. The trust placed in educational institutions by students and society mandates a commitment to uphold the highest standards of data ethics, ensuring that the use of AI in education fortifies, rather than undermines, the sanctity of personal information.
- C. The Role of Educators :** Amidst the digital chorus, the irreplaceable value of human educators resonates more profoundly than ever. AI, for all its analytical prowess and efficiency, lacks the essence of human empathy, the nuanced understanding of ethical conundrums, and the rich, spontaneous creativity that educators bring to the table.

Recognising the symbiotic relationship between AI and educators is vital. Where AI offers tools and insights, educators provide wisdom, ethical guidance, and the personal touch that transforms learning into an enriching human experience. Balancing the strengths of AI with the intrinsic values of human mentorship and interaction is essential to preserving the soul of education, ensuring that the journey through learning is as human as it is intelligent.

Nurturing Human Values through AI

Integrating AI in education should not diminish the human elements of empathy, creativity, and critical thinking but rather augment them. AI can provide educators with tools to understand student needs better, adapt teaching methods, and foster a more inclusive and engaging learning environment. However, this requires a conscious effort to embed human values into AI systems, ensuring they complement rather than replace the human aspects of education.

The ethical dimension of AI in education underscores the importance of designing AI systems that respect privacy, ensure fairness, and promote diversity. Educators and technologists must collaborate to create AI that embodies ethical principles, thereby nurturing a generation of students who are both technologically adept and ethically aware.

III. Distinguishing Reality from Myth

- A. The Fear of Dehumanization :** A prevalent concern is that AI's encroachment into education signals a shift towards an impersonal, mechanised learning environment, stripping education of its human essence. However, this

narrative misses a crucial aspect of AI's role: When thoughtfully integrated, AI can enrich the educational tapestry, not impoverish it. By automating routine tasks, AI offers educators the precious gift of time that can be reinvested in fostering more profound connections with students, understanding their unique challenges and aspirations, and nurturing a learning environment brimming with empathy and human interaction.

B. The Myth of AI Replacing Teachers :

AI supplanting educators has loomed large in public discourse, conjuring images of classrooms devoid of human warmth, where algorithms reign supreme. However, this dystopian vision is far from the unfolding reality. AI is not a rival but a partner for educators, a sophisticated set of tools designed to enhance, not eclipse, the human facets of teaching. With AI handling data-driven tasks, educators are liberated to focus on their role's nuanced, irreplaceable aspects—mentorship, ethical guidance, and the cultivation of critical and creative thinking.

C. Understanding AI's Limitations :

While AI's capabilities are impressive, it is vital to acknowledge its bounds. AI can sift through data and identify patterns with astonishing speed and accuracy, but it needs a nuanced understanding of the world that humans possess. It cannot grasp context with the depth of a human, nor can it replicate the authentic creativity or empathy that are hallmarks of human intelligence. By recognising these constraints, we can position AI where it excels—as a powerful adjunct to human insight and creativity rather than a standalone entity.

IV. Implementing AI with Human Values at the Core

A. Collaborative Design : The design and deployment of AI in education should be given to more than just technologists. It requires a collaborative approach that brings educators, students, ethicists, and AI developers together. This collective endeavour ensures that AI tools are not only technically proficient but also imbued with the values and goals of the educational community. Such a collaborative design process can ensure that AI technologies are attuned to the needs and values of their users, fostering an environment where technology serves as a bridge to deeper understanding and connection.

B. Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation :

Integrating AI into education is not a 'set it and forget it' proposition. It necessitates ongoing vigilance to ensure that these tools are being used in ways that are ethical, equitable, and effective. This includes monitoring biases continuously, ensuring that AI applications do not inadvertently perpetuate inequalities. Regular evaluations can assess how AI impacts learning outcomes, student engagement, and the educational experience. By maintaining a commitment to assessment and accountability, the educational community can ensure that AI serves as a force for good, enhancing learning while upholding core human values.

C. Education about AI : An informed engagement with AI is essential for both educators and students. Understanding AI's mechanisms, capabilities, and limitations demystifies this technology, empowering users to interact more

effectively and critically. Education about AI can foster a community that is proficient in using these tools and vigilant about ensuring they are employed in ways that enrich the learning experience and uphold ethical standards. By cultivating a deep understanding of AI, the educational community can harness its potential while removing the pitfalls accompanying uncritical or uninformed use.

Debunking Myths : AI as a Partner, Not a Replacement

The narrative that AI could replace human educators and learners in higher education is a misconception that requires clarification. This myth arises from a misunderstanding of AI's role and capabilities in the educational sphere. With its profound data-processing and pattern-recognition abilities, AI offers substantial benefits in understanding complex information, identifying educational trends, and opening new pathways for research and instruction. However, these capabilities extend beyond replicating the nuanced interpersonal interactions and deep understanding human educators bring to the classroom.

To debunk this myth effectively, it is crucial to emphasise that AI's most significant potential in education is realised when it complements human intelligence. AI tools are most potent when they augment, rather than replace, human educators' creativity, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence. This synergy between human and artificial intelligence can enable educators to address the multifaceted challenges of modern education more effectively, enriching the learning experience while maintaining the core humanistic values that define quality education.

The Road Ahead: Harmonising AI and Humanity

As we integrate AI into higher education, it is imperative to adopt a balanced approach that aligns technological advancements with the enduring principles of humanity. This process requires an ongoing, inclusive dialogue among all stakeholders in the educational ecosystem, including educators, students, technologists, and policymakers. The goal is to ensure that AI acts as a catalyst for enhancing human potential and enriching the educational journey rather than as a disruptive force that undermines these objectives.

To harmonise AI with human values in education, institutions must adopt a proactive, thoughtful approach to deploying AI technologies. This includes designing AI systems with ethical considerations at the forefront, ensuring that these systems support equitable and inclusive educational practices. Continuous assessment and adaptation are necessary to align AI applications with the evolving needs and values of the educational community.

Moreover, it is essential to prepare students to thrive in a world where AI plays a significant role. This preparation goes beyond teaching technical skills to include fostering an understanding of AI's ethical, social, and cultural implications. By doing so, higher education can equip students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills necessary to navigate the complexities of a technologically advanced society with wisdom and integrity.

Ultimately, the integration of AI in higher education should not be viewed as an end but as a means to enhance the human dimensions of learning and teaching. By ensuring that AI amplifies rather than diminishes the human experience, higher education can embrace the benefits of

technological innovation while preserving the core values underpinning a meaningful and enriching educational journey.

Conclusion :

In conclusion, integrating AI into higher education heralds a new era of innovation and opportunity, yet significant responsibilities and ethical considerations accompany it. The myth that AI seeks to replace human educators and learners is a misunderstanding of AI's role as an augmentative force that can enhance rather than diminish the human elements of teaching and learning. By leveraging AI as a collaborative partner, higher education can transcend traditional boundaries, offering personalised, accessible, and inclusive learning experiences that prepare students for a future where technology and humanity are inextricably intertwined.

As we navigate this new terrain, it is paramount that higher education institutions maintain a steadfast commitment to human values, ensuring that AI is employed not just as a tool for efficiency but as a means to enrich and deepen the educational journey. This requires a concerted effort to understand AI's capabilities and limitations, design and implement AI systems ethically, and continually assess their impact on the educational community.

The road ahead calls for harmonious integration of AI in higher education, where technology enhances human potential and educators, students, and technologists work together to create a future that respects and uplifts the dignity, creativity, and intellectual curiosity of all learners. By embracing AI as a partner in education, we can forge a path that leverages the best of what technology and humanity have to offer, cultivating an intellectually vibrant, ethically grounded, and profoundly human learning environment.

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INDIA AS THE LEADER AND VOICE OF GLOBAL SOUTH

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Abstract :

India assumed the G-20 presidency last year, the External Affairs minister of India reiterated India's role as the Voice of The Global South that is otherwise under-represented and often overlooked in global forums. India then went on to utilize the platform of G-20 to further strengthen its credentials as the leader and voice of the global south. There was also the Voice of Global South Summit at the end of 2023, where India expressed its desire and willingness to stand up as the Voice and leader of the Global South. Purpose of this paper is to analyse the increasing importance of India as a leader of Global South.

Key Words : India, Global North, Global South, leader, G-20, BRICS

Introduction :

India's G-20 presidency, expansion of BRICS into BRICS Plus and the unwillingness of many leading countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America to support NATO over the Russia-Ukraine war has brought to fore once again the term 'Global South'.

The Indian government has since the year of its G-20 presidency claimed to have restored the country's role as the Voice of the Global South in international dialogues. This claim is often backed by reference to its efforts to focus attention on the issue of debt stress, and default in poor developing countries and on the induction of the African Union into G-20.

Global North and Global South :

Global North refers loosely to countries like the US, Canada, Europe, Russia, Australia and New Zealand, while Global South includes countries from Asia, Africa and South America. This classification is considered more accurate as the countries share similarities in terms of wealth, indicators of healthcare, and education etc.

Emergence of Global North/South Concept :

In the post-cold war world, the first/third world classification was no longer feasible because when the communist USSR disintegrated in 1991, most countries had no choice but to align with the US, the only remaining global superpower.

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The East/west binary was also seen as often perpetuating stereotypical thinking about African and Asian countries. Also, most of the Global South countries have a shared history of colonialism. The region has mostly remained under-represented in key international forums like UNSC. This exclusion is seen as an obstacle to the adequate and faster growth of Global south.

The phrase 'global South' marks a shift from focus on development or cultural difference towards an emphasis on geopolitical power relations.

Significance of Global South :

The global south has experienced a major shift in economic and political power in recent years. Projections indicate that by 2030, three of the four largest economies will be the global south countries, with China and India leading the way.

Asian countries are also predicted to play a significant role in what some political scientists call the 'Asian century'. Climate change has started showing its adverse impacts and affecting the people and their livelihoods in big way and the most adversely impacted countries happen to be in global south and there is an urgent need to band together and raise voice at the global stage.

Importance of Global South for India :

The most populous country in the world and thriving economy which prides itself in being referred to as The Mother of democracy and Vishwaguru has not got a fair deal at west dominated global institutions like the UNSC, WTO etc. It is like extended neighborhood for India which has political, historical and

civilizational relations with most countries of the grouping.

The leadership of Global South is an opportunity to set things right and prove its leadership credentials.

Initiatives for South-South Cooperation :

1. Voice of Global South Summit (2023): Hosted in November 2023 under the theme 'Together, for everyone's growth, With Everyone's trust', The Summit focused on sharing with countries of the global south the key outcomes achieved in various G-20 meetings over the course of India's Presidency. It also saw discussions on the challenges faced by the global south and global south answers to address them, in the background of growing uncertainty, conflict, and geopolitical tensions across the world.
2. Expansion of G20 to include African union is a step in the right direction and gives much deserved representation.
3. Expansion of BRICS into BRICS plus by inclusion of UAE, Ethiopia, Iran and Egypt.
4. Indian initiatives like the vaccine Maitri campaign during the Covid pandemic, proposal on TRIPS waiver etc.
5. Indian PM also announced five initiatives to support the development of other developing countries in the Voice of global south summit, 2023. These initiatives include Global south Centre of excellence, Global south Science and Technology initiative, Arogya Maitri project, Global south young diplomats forum, the global south scholarship.

Problem Areas :

1. Global south is not a strict geographical entity or a political organization. As a result, there is no real coherence and synergy among the countries.
2. Russia-Ukraine war has severely affected the least developed countries, aggravating the concerns related to food, energy and finance.
3. China is increasingly making inroads in the global south through the Belt and Road initiative (BRI). It is still questionable if BRI will be a win-win situation for both parties or will it only benefit China.
4. Inadequate access to resources among the countries of the global south who have varying degrees of industrialization and development and living standards.
5. COVID 19 pandemic has exacerbated the existing divides and affected the Global south countries much more than the Global North.
6. Reluctant India: Even though it wants to be seen as the leader of the global south, India has somewhat been reluctant and not taken the bull by the horn. Whether it is the Israel - Hamas conflict and the resultant humanitarian disaster, or the Russia- Ukraine war, India's stand should have been far more assertive and clearer.

Conclusion :

Championing the global south today would require a more active Indian engagement with the messy regional politics in the developing

world. India must also realize that global south is not a monolith and design its policies affectively. India wants to become a bridge between North and south. For that India needs to translate this ambition into effective policy to ensure that there is no contradiction between the simultaneous pursuit of universal and particular goals. This needs a tailored Indian policy to different regions and groups of the developing world.

Leadership of the global south is both an opportunity as well as responsibility which India needs to fulfill effectively in order to emerge as a true Superpower and take its deserved position as the Vishwaguru in the ever-changing global order.

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हिन्दी खण्ड



नेपाल में दलित राजनैतिक कला

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आलेख सार

कला मानवीय विचारों का सम्प्रेषण है। कला के माध्यम से मानव अपनी भावनाओं, स्वप्नों को व्यक्त करते हैं। विभिन्न देशों में कला विभिन्न प्रकार के आन्दोलनों में प्रयोग की जा रही है। दक्षिण एशिया का दलित समाज इस मामले में अनोखा है। हजारों साल से दमित, दलित एवं शोषित दलित समाज कला का प्रयोग अपनी सामाजिक एवं राजनैतिक प्रस्थिति के उत्थान के लिए कर रहा है। इस मामले में नेपाल देश के दलित अनोखा उदाहरण है। नेपाल में भारत के समान ही दलित समाज है थोड़ी भिन्नता के साथ। अब प्रश्न यह भी है कि दलित राजनैतिक कला है क्या ? दलित राजनैतिक कला, वह कला है जिस कला का सृजन दलित कलाकार कर रहे हैं और उस कला का मूल विषय दलितों के जीवन उनके संघर्ष से जुड़ा है। चूँकि नेपाल में लोकतंत्र एकदम शैशवावस्था में है इसी कारण वहां का दलित आंदोलन भी मजबूत नहीं है। पिछले पंद्रह साल में नेपाल में दलितों की स्थिति में उल्लेखनीय सुधार हुआ है। नेपाल में दलित आधिकारिक शब्द है। वहां दलित जनसंख्या नेपाल की कुल आबादी का लगभग 17% है। नेपाल में दलितों को 9% आरक्षण भी नौकरी में दिया गया है। वहाँ दलित कला को प्रोत्साहित करने में गैर सरकारी संगठनों का बड़ा हाथ है। नेपाल में जागरण मीडिया सेंटर एव फेमिनिस्ट दलित ऑर्गनाइजेशन जैसी संस्थाओं ने दलित कला को प्रोत्साहित किया है। इन संस्थाओं ने अनेक कलाकारों को जोड़ा और उनसे दलित जीवन से जुड़े विषयों पर अनेक गीत, चित्र, नाटक, साहित्य का सृजन करवाया या उसमें दिशा-निर्देश प्रदान किया। इसके अतिरिक्त अनेक दलित कलाकार निजी स्तर पर भी इस कला के सृजन में लगे हैं।

शब्द कुंजी : नेपाल, दलित, कला, जागरण, सृजन, संस्कृति।

नेपाल का सामाजिक परिदृश्य

नेपाल में दलितों की आबादी एक सरकारी अनुमान के अनुसार लगभग 17% है। नेपाल में दलित भारत के समान ही भेदभाव झेलते आये हैं और सामाजिक स्तर पर आखिरी सोपान पर हैं। नेपाल में दलित बहुत हद तक भारत के समान हैं लेकिन उनकी संरचना थोड़ी सी अलग है। नेपाल देश को मुख्यतया तीन भागों में विभक्त किया जाता है पर्वत, पहाड़ एवं तराई। पर्वत में वे इलाके हैं जहाँ शीत ऋतु में हिमपात होता है इसके बाद कम ऊँचाई वाले इलाके को पहाड़ कहा जाता है। इन इलाको में कामी (लोहार) सार्की (चर्मकार), एवं दमाई (दर्जी एवं संगीतकार) सुनार जातियाँ हैं उसके

* लक्ष्मण सिंह ने जवाहरलाल नेहरू विश्वविद्यालय से कला एवं सौंदर्य शास्त्र में परास्नातक किया। उसके बाद जामिया मिल्लिया इस्लामिया से नेपाल और भारत के दलितों की राजनैतिक कला पर पी-एचडी की

बाद और सबसे निचले इलाके के लिए तराई शब्द का प्रयोग किया जाता है। तराई के दलितों में तीन भाषाई समूह हैं मैथिली, भोजपुरी एवं अवधी। तराई के दलितों की सामाजिक संरचना पड़ोसी राष्ट्र भारत के समान है। तराई की दलित जातियाँ ततमा, खाटवे, दुसाध, मुसहर, बातार, धोबी, चमार, डोम एवं बादी, गायने (गंधर्व) हैं। हर इलाके में दलितों की संरचना में फर्क है। नेपाल में दलित आधिकारिक शब्द है और इसे सरकारी मान्यता है। नेपाल के दलित आंदोलन पर डॉक्टर अम्बेडकर का भी प्रभाव है। 1956 में डॉक्टर बाबासाहेब अम्बेडकर काठमांडू में विश्व बौद्ध सम्मेलन में भाग लेने आये थे उस समय उन्होंने यहाँ की कुछ दलित बस्तियों का दौरा किया और दलितों को जागरूक होने का संदेश दिया, उस समय राजशाही की जकड़ बहुत थी और नेपाल का संविधान मनु स्मृति से प्रभावित था। एक प्रकार से जातीय भेदभाव को सामाजिक एवं शासकीय मान्यता मिली हुई थी।

नेपाल में दलितों का एक और प्रकार है जो बहुत अनोखा है वह हैं नेवारी दलित। नेवार जाति समूह मुख्यतया हिन्दू पहचान वाला ही है जिसके लगभग 15% व्यक्ति बुद्धिस्त हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त भी नेवारों के धर्म एवं संस्कृति पर बौद्ध मत का गहरा प्रभाव है। नेवारों को काठमांडू घाटी का मूल निवासी माना जाता है। दलित डेवलेपमेन्ट कमिटी ने नेवार जाति समूह में इन जातियों को दलित के रूप में चिन्हित किया है कुसुले (मृतक क्रियाओं को करने वाले, संगीतकार एवं दर्जी) खाडगी (कसाई एवं दुग्ध विक्रेता) पोडे (सफाईकर्मी) चायमे या चायमखाला (झाड़ू लगाने वाले एवं कूड़ा उठाने वाले) हलाहलु (सफाईकर्मी) नेवार समाज वस्तुतः सनातन धर्म की चातुर्वर्ण व्यवस्था को नहीं मानता था लेकिन नेपाल के राणा

शासकों ने उन्हें वर्ण व्यवस्था मानने पर मजबूर कर दिया। कुछ दलित नेवारों ने अपने आप को दलित मानने से इनकार भी किया और इसके विरुद्ध 2003 में नेशनल दलित कमीशन में एक याचिका भी प्रस्तुत की। उपरोक्त तथ्यों के आधार पर कहा जा सकता है कि नेपाली दलित समाज पूर्ण रूपेण भारतीय दलित समाज के समान नहीं हैं। वहाँ लोकतान्त्रिक आंदोलन के साथ ही धीरे-धीरे दलित आंदोलन ने जोर पकड़ा लेकिन भारत की तुलना में इसकी गति अत्यंत धीमी रही इसका प्रमुख कारण नेपाल में 2008 तक राजशाही का बना रहना और पुराने संविधान का मनु स्मृति के आधार पर होना भी है।

नेपाल में राजनैतिक आंदोलनों में कला का प्रयोग मुख्यतया माओवादी आंदोलन के समय से शुरू हुआ। माओवादियों के अपने सांस्कृतिक दस्ते होते थे। इस सांस्कृतिक दस्तों के माध्यम से ये गाँव-गाँव में जाकर सहजता से अपने विचारों का प्रचार करते थे। ये माध्यम नुक्कड़ नाटक, पोस्टर, गीत, फोरम थियेटर, चित्र इत्यादि रहे हैं। माओवादियों ने नुक्कड़ नाटकों एवं गीतों का काफी प्रयोग किया जिससे ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में रहने वाली अनपढ़ एवं अशिक्षित जनता को मनोरंजन के माध्यम से जागरूक किया जा सके। अनेक दलित कार्यकर्ता पहले माओवादी रहे और उन्होंने अपने इस कौशल का प्रयोग बाद में दलित आंदोलन से जुड़ने के बाद दलित चेतना के लिए किया। अनेक ऐसे दलित चिंतक मार्क्सवादी विचार को दलित सौंदर्य शास्त्र एवं पूर्ण रूप से दलित मुक्ति आंदोलन से जोड़ने के भी पक्षधर रहे हैं। माओवादी आंदोलन के अतिरिक्त नेपाल में काम करने वाले गैर सरकारी संगठनों का दलित आंदोलन की नींव मजबूत करने में बड़ा योगदान है। एन जी ओ के प्रचार माध्यमों में गीत, पोस्टर

इत्यादि बहुतायत में प्रयोग किये गए। ये गैर सरकारी संगठन दलितों के लिए योजना बनाने, विभिन्न मुद्दों पर उनकी लड़ाई लड़ने, नीति बनाने में प्रमुख भूमिका निभाते हैं।

इसके अतिरिक्त शुद्ध रूप से अनेक दलित बुद्धिजीवियों और कलाकारों ने दलित सौंदर्य शास्त्र को भी नेपाल में विकसित किया और दलित सौंदर्य शास्त्र को वहां स्थापित किया। दलित चिंतक घनश्याम ढकाल का कथन है “दलित सौंदर्य शास्त्र किसे चाहिये? दलित सौंदर्य शास्त्र की भूमिका क्या है? यह निःसंदेह एक महत्वपूर्ण सवाल है। इसके जवाब में वह स्वयं कहते हैं कि हिन्दू धर्म व्यवस्था ने जाति के रूप में वर्गों की रचना की है। दलित मुक्ति का मार्ग सीधा एवं स्पष्ट है, दलित मुक्ति वर्ग मुक्ति के समान है। दलितों को सांस्कृतिक माध्यमों से शोषक व्यवस्था से लड़ना चाहिए। मार्क्सवादी सौंदर्यशास्त्र दलित आंदोलन के लिए बेहतर है क्योंकि वह वर्ग मुक्ति का हिमायती है। घनश्याम ढकाल आगे अपने इस तर्क को विस्तार देते हुए कहते हैं कि दलितों के लिए वर्ग को प्रथम रखकर सोचना चाहिए न कि जाति को। इसमें एक दृष्टव्य मत यह भी है कि ब्राह्मणवादी सनातन धर्म अपने अनुष्ठानों में दलितों द्वारा की गयी कला का प्रयोग करता है। उदाहरण के लिए नेपाल की दमाई, गंधर्व एवं बादी जातियां परम्परागत रूप से श्रव्य कलाओं के माध्यम से जीविकोपार्जन करती हैं। इन कलाओं में मंदिरों के बाहर बाजा बजाना, धार्मिक जुलूसों, एवं अन्य धार्मिक एवं लौकिक आयोजन जैसे विवाह एवं अन्य संस्कारों के समय आयोजनों में गाना बजाना भी शामिल है। दमाई जाति द्वारा बजाये जाने वाला पंचयी बाजा प्रमुख है जिसका प्रदर्शन धार्मिक समारोहों में किया जाता है।

इन आयोजनों के समय भी उच्च जाति के लोग इन गाने बजाने वालों से दूर ही रहते हैं, शारीरिक दूरी बना कर रखते दलितों को पीढ़ियों से अनेक मानव अधिकारों से वंचित रखा गया है। प्रशासनिक पद नहीं दिए गए, शस्त्र उठाने का अधिकार नहीं था इस कारणवश भी दलितों के पास उच्च जातियों का मनोरंजन करना भी एक व्यावसायिक विकल्प था और उन्होंने उसे अपनाया। इसका एक और लाभ हुआ मनोरंजन करने वाले समुदाय के कारण उनकी समीपता उच्च जातियों के साथ बनी रही एवं कुछ अन्य दलित जातियों जैसे सफाईकर्मी एवं कसाई के मुकाबले थोड़ा कम भेदभाव झेलना पड़ा लेकिन समीपता के कारण हर प्रकार का शोषण भी हुआ जैसे बादी जाति की महिलाएं बड़ी जातियों के पुरुषों के समक्ष नाचने के अलावा देह व्यापार भी करने लगी।

नेपाल में राजशाही लम्बे समय तक रहने के कारण नेपाली दलित समाज ज्यादा उत्पीड़ित रहा उन्हें संवैधानिक अधिकार बहुत बाद में मिले। नेपाल का पुराना संविधान मुलुकी आईन मनु स्मृति से प्रभावित था जिसमें जातीय भेदभाव को संवैधानिक संस्तुति थी। मंगोलाइड जातियों के साथ अंतःक्रिया होने के कारण नेपाल में नए प्रकार के दलित भी बने। नेपाल के दमाई संगीतकार ब्राह्मणों, क्षत्रियों एवं अन्य उच्च जातियों के सभी संस्कारों के समय में गाने बजाने वालों के रूप में प्रस्तुत रहते हैं लेकिन फिर भी पवित्र स्थान या मंदिर ने उन्हें घुसने नहीं दिया जाता था अभी पिछले कुछ सालों में इसमें बदलाव आया है। इसमें एक बात ध्यान देने योग्य है कि दमाई महिलाओं की अनुपस्थिति। दमाई महिलाएं इस प्रकार के किसी भी संस्कार में सम्मिलित नहीं होती। दलितों की इन कलाओं का एक मजबूत लोक आधार भी है। नेपाली दलित कला का एक

मुख्य आधार है इस पर ग्रामीण सांस्कृतिक प्रभाव। जैसे पंचयी बाजा दमाई जाति से जुड़ा है उसी प्रकार सारंगी गंधर्व (गायने) जाति से।

नेपाली दलित कला और चेतना

अन्य विकासशील देशों के समान ही नेपाल में भी गैर सरकारी संगठन बड़ी संख्या में हैं। नेपाल में ये गैर सरकारी संगठन अनेक आंदोलनों की अगुवाई भी करते हैं इन संगठनों में काम करने वाले लोगों को बाकायदा वेतन दिया जाता है। दलितों के लिए काम करने वाले संगठनों में कर्मी भी बहुधा दलित ही होते हैं। इन संगठनों को ज्यादातर धन यूरोपीय देशों एवं संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका से आता है। ऐसे संगठनों में एक प्रमुख नाम है जागरण मीडिया सेंटर का। जागरण मीडिया सेंटर दलित पत्रकारों द्वारा बनाया गया एक संगठन है एवं इसका मुख्यालय राजधानी काठमांडू में है। जागरण मीडिया सेंटर ने दलित कलाओं के उत्थान के लिए काफी काम किया है। परम्परागत कलाओं को प्रश्रय देने के बजाय इन्होंने राजनैतिक एवं सामाजिक उद्भव को स्वर देने वाले अनेक कार्यक्रम शुरू किये जिसमें सबसे प्रमुख है इनकी कम्युनिटी रेडियो। जो दलित मुद्दों पर अनेक कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत करते हैं और इस रेडियो की पहुँच नेपाल के अनेक दुर्गम इलाकों तक है। जागरण मीडिया सेंटर ने अनेक दलित गीतों की भी रचना की उनकी रेकॉर्डिंग की और प्रसारण किया। ऐसे ही एक गीत का हिन्दी अनुवाद कुछ इस प्रकार है

“इंसान इंसान में क्या फर्क है? छाती पर हाथ रखिये आत्मा पर हाथ रखिये, आत्मा को साक्षी बनाइये, सब इंसान एक हैं”

जागरण मीडिया के गीत दलितों के लिए बनी सरकारी योजनाओं, भेदभाव के विरुद्ध बने कानून

का जनमानस में प्रचार करने वाले उद्देश्य को लेकर रचे गए हैं और जातिवाद पर सवाल खड़ा करने वाले हैं। इसके आलावा जागरण मीडिया सेंटर ने पेशेवर एवं गैर पेशेवर दलित चित्रकारों से अनेक चित्र भी बनवाये जो जाति के मुद्दों पर दलित प्रतिरोध के स्वर को बुलंद करते हैं। एक ऐसा ही पोस्टर है जिसमें एक विशालकाय घंटा है जिसके नीचे आधे दबे हुए दलित अपने कार्य सम्पादित कर रहे हैं। इसी प्रकार के विभिन्न प्रकारों से जातीय भेदभाव को अनेक रचनात्मक प्रकारों से दिखाते हुए चित्र जागरण मीडिया सेंटर ने बनवाए हैं।

नेपाल की गंधर्व जाति जिसे जन सामान्य भाषा में गायने कहा जाता है एक कलाकार जाति है। ये घुमक्कड़ जाति है। ऐसा माना जाता है कि गायने जाति पुराणों में वर्णित गंधर्वों के वंशज हैं। इनका मुख्य व्यवसाय सारंगी बजाकर, गीत गाकर लोगों का मनोरंजन करना है। ये नेपाल के शहरों में, बसों में सारंगी बजाते हुए दिख जाते हैं। नेपाली समाज में इस जाति को संगीतकार जाति माना गया है। टेलीविजन एवं रेडियो के प्रचार-प्रसार से पहले ये लोग गाँव-गाँव घूमकर संगीत बजाते थे और खबरों का भी प्रसार करते थे। गन्धर्वों ने राजा पृथ्वी नारायण शाह के समय नेपाली राज्य के विस्तार में भी प्रमुख भूमिका निभाई थी। ये गाँव-गाँव जाकर राजा पृथ्वी नारायण शाह का प्रचार-प्रसार और राष्ट्रवादी भावना को फैलाने का कार्य करते थे। मोबाइल, इंटरनेट के प्रसार के बाद गायने जाति अपने परम्परागत पेशे के साथ जीवन-यापन करने में संघर्ष कर रही है। अनेक गैर सरकारी संगठन इनकी सहायता के लिए काम भी कर रहे हैं। नेपाल की दलित राजनैतिक कला में कचहरी थियेटर का भी योगदान है। कचहरी थियेटर

फोरम थियेटर का एक प्रकार है। फोरम थियेटर में नुक्कड़ नाटक के कलाकार दर्शकों को भी अपने नाटक का हिस्सा बनाकर उनसे संवाद करते हैं। नेपाल में कचहरी या फोरम थियेटर का प्रारम्भ माओवादी आंदोलन के समय में हुआ जिसे बाद में कुछ दलित माओवादियों ने सीख कर अपनी समस्याओं के समाधान और जन चेतना फैलाने के लिए किया। फोरम थिएटर का अविष्कार औगुस्टो बाउल ने किया था और इसे उत्पीड़ितों का रंगमंच कहा था। फोरम थियेटर में वस्तुतः रंगमंच के कलाकार एक समस्या को दर्शाते हैं और फिर दर्शकों से संवाद करके पूछते हैं कि ऐसी स्थिति में आप क्या करते? दर्शक अपने विवेकानुसार तुरंत थियेटर का हिस्सा बनकर जवाब देते हैं। नेपाल के सिंधुली जिले में फोरम या कचहरी थियेटर का चमार जाति के बीच में अच्छा प्रयोग किया गया। शोधार्थी गुवेरा ने इस पर शोध किया है।

नेपाल के कई गैर सरकारी संगठन भी फोरम थियेटर का प्रयोग सरकारी योजनाओं के ज्ञान और अनेक सामाजिक मुद्दों को जनमानस को सरलता से समझाने के लिए कर रहे हैं। एक दूसरा दलित नारीवादी संगठन फेडरेशन ऑफ दलित वीमन भी इस मुद्दे पर काफी काम कर रहा है। फेडो नाम वाले इस संगठन ने कई दलित कलाकारों को जोड़ा और उनसे कलाकृतियां और गीत संगीत तैयार करवा कर उसका इस्तेमाल प्रचार में किया। ऐसी ही एक दलित महिला चित्रकार जो अल्प समय के लिए फेडो से जुड़ी रही हैं अरुणा हिंगमांग हैं। अरुणा हिंगमांग से बात करने पर पता चला कि उन्होंने चित्रकारी की कोई औपचारिक शिक्षा ग्रहण नहीं की है वह स्वयं के अभ्यास से चित्र बनाती हैं। अरुणा हिंगमांग के चित्रों में दलित जीवन के अनेक पक्षों

को दर्शाया गया है। अरुणा हिंगमांग गैर दलित थीम पर भी चित्र बनाती हैं अरुणा हिंगमांग का कहना है कि वह अपनी कला को ज्यादा से ज्यादा दलित महिला मुद्दे पर केन्द्रित करना चाहती हैं। अरुणा कहती हैं कि उनकी कला उनके अपने जीवन से भी प्रेरित है कि किस प्रकार एक दलित महिला को समाज में अपना स्थान बनाने के लिए संघर्ष करना पड़ता है। अरुणा हिंगमांग का कहना है कि दलित समबन्धी चित्र बनाने के कारण उन्हें नेपाल के स्थापित जातिवादी कला समीक्षकों की कटु आलोचना का सामना करना पड़ा। उनके चित्रों को कूड़ा एवं घटिया बताया गया।

दूसरा एक ऐसा ही कलाकार मनीष हरिजन है। जिसे हिंदूवादी संगठनों की कड़ी आलोचना का सामना करना पड़ा जब मनीष ने सुपरकाली नामक चित्र बनाया। इस चित्र में मनीष हरिजन ने दुर्गा देवी को बीच की ऊँगली दिखाते हुए दर्शाया है। मनीष हरिजन अभी युवा है। मनीष का जन्म पश्चिमी नेपाल के एक गाँव में निर्धन दलित परिवार में हुआ। मनीष ने उसके बाद काठमांडू विश्वविद्यालय से ललित कला में स्नातक की। बचपन के अभावों, भेदभाव से प्रेरित होकर मनीष ने दलित थीम पर चित्र बनाने शुरू किये। मनीष का कहना है कि उसके चित्र मूल समाज की अभिव्यक्ति है।

नेपाल के मुसहरों के गीत भी उनकी सामाजिक अभिव्यक्ति को दर्शाते हैं। उनके कुल देवता सम्बन्धी गीत इस बात की स्पष्ट अभिव्यक्ति हैं कि उनका धर्म उनकी अपनी मान्यताओं वाला लोक धर्म है उसकी अपनी पहचान है एवं वे पौराणिक शबरी की संतान हैं। ऐसे गीतों के माध्यम से मुसहर जाति अपनी सामाजिक प्रस्थिति के विषय में मजबूत दावा पेश करती है।

निष्कर्ष :

नेपाल के कई गैर सरकारी संगठन भी फोरम थियेटर का प्रयोग सरकारी योजनाओं के ज्ञान और अनेक सामाजिक मुद्दों को जनमानस को सरलता से समझाने के लिए कर रहे हैं। अतः हम कह सकते हैं कि नेपाल के दलितों की कला के माध्यम से अपने सामाजिक एवं राजनैतिक दावे की ये कहानियाँ उत्तरोत्तर नेपाल में लोकतंत्र की मजबूत होती स्थिति का संकेत है। साथ ही साथ रचनात्मक प्रतिरोध संघर्ष का एक सांस्कृतिक माध्यम भी है।

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बिहार में स्थानीय शासन की एक परीक्षा : विकेंद्रीकरण और विकास के लिए चुनौतियाँ और संभावनाएँ

डॉ० रमेश सिंह*

आलेख सार

स्थानीय शासन क्षेत्रों के सामाजिक-आर्थिक ताने-बाने को आकार देने में एक बुनियादी आधारशिला के रूप में कार्य करता है, विशेष रूप से बिहार, भारत जैसे घनी आबादी और जटिल सामाजिक-राजनीतिक गतिशीलता वाले क्षेत्रों में। यह शोध बिहार में स्थानीय शासन की जटिलताओं की जांच करता है, उन बाधाओं का खुलासा करता है जो इसकी दक्षता और प्रभावशीलता में बाधा डालती हैं। प्राचीन भारतीय सभ्यता का उद्गम स्थल और सांस्कृतिक विरासत का भंडार होने के बावजूद, बिहार को शासन में लगातार चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ता है जो इसके विकास पथ में बाधा बनती हैं। शोध प्रभावी स्थानीय शासन के लिए प्राथमिक बाधाओं के रूप में नौकरशाही जड़ता, राजनीतिक भ्रष्टाचार, अपर्याप्त वित्त, जवाबदेही की कमी और खराब बुनियादी ढांचे जैसे महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दों की पहचान करता है। इसके अलावा, अध्ययन बिहार में पंचायती राज संस्थानों (पीआरआई) की मौजूदा संरचनाओं की जांच करता है, जो प्रशासनिक और विकासात्मक भूमिकाओं की मांग के मद्देनजर उनकी परिचालन सीमाओं को दर्शाता है तथा गुणात्मक विश्लेषण अनुभवजन्य डेटा और भागीदारी टिप्पणियों पर आधारित है, जो नीति निर्माण और कार्यान्वयन के बीच असमानता को रेखांकित करता है। यह स्थानीय निकायों को सशक्त बनाने, शासन और निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रियाओं में नागरिकों की अधिक भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करने के साधन के रूप में मजबूत विकेंद्रीकरण की वकालत करता है। पेपर एक बहु-आयामी दृष्टिकोण के लिए तर्क देता है जिसमें संस्थागत सुधार, क्षमता निर्माण, बढ़ी हुई राजकोषीय स्वायत्तता और स्थानीय शासन तंत्र को सुव्यवस्थित करने के लिए तकनीकी हस्तक्षेप शामिल हैं।

प्रस्तावित रणनीतियों में पीआरआई के संस्थागत ढांचे को मजबूत करना, निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों और अधिकारियों के लिए कठोर प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम, पर्याप्त संसाधन आवंटन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए वित्तीय विकेंद्रीकरण, पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही बढ़ाने के लिए ई-गवर्नेंस का कार्यान्वयन शामिल है। पहचानी गई चुनौतियों का समाधान करके और विकेंद्रीकरण के अवसरों का लाभ उठाकर, बिहार जमीनी स्तर पर शासन को महत्वपूर्ण रूप से बढ़ा सकता है, जिससे क्षेत्रीय विकास को गति मिल सकती है।

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शब्द कुंजी : स्थानीय शासन, बिहार, विकेंद्रीकरण, विकास, पंचायती राज संस्थाएँ, राजकोषीय स्वायत्तता, ई-गवर्नेंस, संस्थागत सुधार, क्षमता निर्माण, पारदर्शिता।

परिचय :

स्थानीय शासन किसी भी क्षेत्र के सामाजिक-आर्थिक विकास में एक महत्वपूर्ण तत्व है, जो उस नींव के रूप में कार्य करता है जिस पर एक जीवंत और समावेशी समाज का निर्माण होता है। भारतीय संदर्भ में, देश के पूर्वी हिस्से में स्थित बिहार को शासन, गरीबी और अविकसितता से संबंधित कई चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा है। अपने ऐतिहासिक महत्व के बावजूद, बिहार ने अपने कुछ समृद्ध समकक्षों में देखी गई प्रगति के स्तर को हासिल करने के लिए संघर्ष किया है। इस चुनौती में योगदान देने वाले प्रमुख कारकों में से एक स्थानीय शासन की स्थिति है।

शब्द “स्थानीय शासन” विकेंद्रीत निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रिया को संदर्भित करता है, जहाँ शक्ति स्थानीय अधिकारियों को हस्तांतरित की जाती है और सामुदायिक भागीदारी को प्रोत्साहित किया जाता है। प्रभावी स्थानीय शासन नागरिक सहभागिता को बढ़ावा देता है, जवाबदेही को बढ़ावा देता है और यह सुनिश्चित करता है कि विकास के प्रयास स्थानीय समुदायों की विशिष्ट आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप हों। बिहार की विकास यात्रा काफी हद तक इसकी स्थानीय शासन प्रणालियों की ताकत और प्रभावशीलता पर निर्भर करती है।

स्वतंत्रता के बाद का युग

आजादी के बाद का बिहार का इतिहास राजनीतिक और सामाजिक-आर्थिक चुनौतियों की एक श्रृंखला की विशेषता है। 1947 में ब्रिटिश शासन से

स्वतंत्रता प्राप्त करने के बाद, बिहार को शुरू में अपने पैर जमाने के लिए संघर्ष करना पड़ा क्योंकि वह भूमि सुधार, सामाजिक असमानता और आर्थिक विकास से संबंधित मुद्दों को संबोधित करना चाहता था। राज्य की शासन संरचनाएँ इन चुनौतियों से अछूती नहीं थीं।

शासन संरचनाओं का विकास

बदलते राजनीतिक और प्रशासनिक प्रतिमानों के जवाब में बिहार में शासन संरचनाएं समय के साथ विकसित हुई हैं। बिहार में शासन के विकास में प्रमुख मील के पथर शामिल हैं—

1. **स्वतंत्रता और राज्य का दर्जा (1947–1950) :** स्वतंत्रता के बाद, बिहार शुरू में बिहार और उड़ीसा (अब ओडिशा) राज्य का हिस्सा था। 1950 में, बिहार को भारतीय संघ के भीतर एक अलग राज्य के रूप में बनाया गया, जिसकी राजधानी पटना थी।
2. **पंचायती राज प्रणाली (1959) :** बिहार के शासन में महत्वपूर्ण विकासों में से एक 1959 में पंचायती राज प्रणाली का कार्यान्वयन था। इसने राज्य में विकेंद्रीत शासन की शुरुआत को चिह्नित किया, जिसमें ग्रामीण स्थानीय निकायों को शक्ति और जिम्मेदारियाँ सौंपी गई जिन्हें पंचायत के रूप में जाना जाता है। लक्ष्य ग्रामीण विकास में स्थानीय भागीदारी और निर्णय लेने को प्रोत्साहित करना था।
3. **शहरी स्थानीय निकाय (1977) :** 1977 में, बिहार नगरपालिका अधिनियम लागू किया गया, जिसने शहरों और कस्बों पर शासन करने के लिए जिम्मेदार शहरी स्थानीय निकायों की स्थापना की। निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों से युक्त ये निकाय शहरी प्रशासन के प्रबंधन में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।

4. **राजनीतिक अस्थिरता की अवधि (1980—1990 के दशक):** बिहार ने 1980 और 1990 के दशक के दौरान राजनीतिक अस्थिरता और नेतृत्व में लगातार बदलाव का अनुभव किया। इन राजनीतिक अनिश्चितताओं ने राज्य में शासन और विकास प्रयासों को प्रभावित किया।
5. **आर्थिक उदारीकरण (1990 का दशक):** 1990 के दशक में शुरू की गई आर्थिक उदारीकरण नीतियों का बिहार पर महत्वपूर्ण प्रभाव पड़ा। जबकि इन नीतियों ने भारत के कुछ हिस्सों में आर्थिक विकास को बढ़ावा दिया, बिहार ने निवेश और औद्योगीकरण को आकर्षित करने के लिए संघर्ष किया, जिससे क्षेत्रों के बीच असमानताएँ पैदा हुई।
6. **हालिया शासन सुधार:** हाल के वर्षों में, बिहार में शासन संरचनाओं में सुधार के प्रयास किए गए हैं। बिहार पंचायती राज अधिनियम (2006) जैसी पहल का उद्देश्य पंचायतों के कामकाज को मजबूत करना, स्थानीय नेताओं को सशक्त बनाना और जमीनी स्तर के विकास को बढ़ावा देना है।

शासन में अनोखी चुनौतियाँ

बिहार के ऐतिहासिक संदर्भ ने शासन में अनोखी चुनौतियों को जन्म दिया है। राज्य गरीबी, औद्योगीकरण के निम्न स्तर, अपर्याप्त बुनियादी ढांचे और विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में विकास में असमानता जैसे मुद्दों से जूझ रहा है। भूमि स्वामित्व पैटर्न और सामाजिक-आर्थिक असमानता की ऐतिहासिक विरासत कायम है, जो नीति निर्माताओं और प्रशासकों के लिए महत्वपूर्ण बाधाएँ खड़ी कर रही है। इसके अलावा, राज्य की शासन संरचनाओं

को, कई बार, इन चुनौतियों से प्रभावी ढंग से निपटने के लिए संघर्ष करना पड़ा है। स्थानीय सरकारी अधिकारियों के लिए सीमित संसाधन और प्रशिक्षण उपलब्ध होने के कारण प्रशासनिक क्षमता एक चिंता का विषय रही है। राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेप और भ्रष्टाचार ने भी स्थानीय संस्थानों के स्वायत्त कामकाज में बाधा डाली है।

स्थानीय शासन की वर्तमान स्थिति

बिहार में स्थानीय शासन की वर्तमान स्थिति एक ऐसे ढांचे की विशेषता है जिसमें पंचायती राज संस्थान (पीआरआई) और शहरी स्थानीय निकाय दोनों शामिल हैं। ये संस्थान राज्य में विकेंद्रीत निर्णय लेने और सामुदायिक भागीदारी के आधार के रूप में कार्य करते हैं।

पंचायती राज संस्थाएँ (पीआरआई):

1. **ग्राम पंचायतें:** जमीनी स्तर पर, बिहार का स्थानीय शासन ग्राम पंचायतों के इर्द-गिर्द संरचित है, जो ग्रामीण प्रशासन के लिए जिम्मेदार ग्राम-स्तरीय संस्थाएँ हैं। ये संस्थाएँ शासन को ग्रामीण आबादी के करीब लाने में महत्वपूर्ण हैं। प्रत्येक ग्राम पंचायत में निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधि होते हैं, जिनमें एक सरपंच (ग्राम प्रधान), पंचायत समिति सदस्य और वार्ड सदस्य शामिल होते हैं।
2. **पंचायत समितियाँ:** ग्राम पंचायतों के ऊपर पंचायत समितियाँ होती हैं, जो ब्लॉक स्तर पर कार्य करती हैं। पंचायत समितियाँ अपने प्रशासनिक अधिकार क्षेत्र के भीतर कई ग्राम पंचायतों की गतिविधियों के समन्वय और देखरेख के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं। इस स्तर पर निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधियों में अध्यक्ष और सदस्य शामिल होते हैं।

3. **जिला परिषद :** बिहार में पंचायती राज व्यवस्था का सर्वोच्च स्तर जिला परिषद है, जो जिला स्तर पर संचालित होता है। जिला परिषदें एक जिले के भीतर पंचायत समितियों और ग्राम पंचायतों की गतिविधियों की देखरेख और समन्वय करती हैं। निचले स्तरों की तरह, जिला परिषदों में अध्यक्ष और सदस्यों सहित निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधि होते हैं।

शहरी स्थानीय निकाय :

बिहार का शहरी शासन विभिन्न शहरी स्थानीय निकायों के माध्यम से प्रबंधित किया जाता है, जिनमें शामिल हैं—

1. **नगर निगम :** पटना, गया और भागलपुर जैसे प्रमुख शहरों में नगर निगम हैं, जो शहरी क्षेत्रों के संचालन और प्रबंधन के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं। इन निगमों में महापौर और नगर निगम पार्षदों सहित निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधि शामिल होते हैं।
2. **नगर परिषदें :** छोटे शहर और नगर परिषदों द्वारा शासित होते हैं, जिनके निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधि स्थानीय स्तर पर शहरी प्रशासन की देखरेख करते हैं।
3. **नगर पंचायतें :** छोटी शहरी बस्तियों के लिए, नगर पंचायतें शहरी स्थानीय शासन के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं।

मुख्य विशेषताएं और कार्य :

हालाँकि पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों से जुड़ी शासन संरचना कागज पर मजबूत दिखाई देती है, कई प्रमुख विशेषताएं और कार्य इन संस्थानों की प्रभावशीलता को प्रभावित करते हैं—

1. **निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधि :** पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों में निर्वाचित प्रतिनिधि शामिल होते हैं, जिन्हें समय-समय पर चुनावों के

माध्यम से चुना जाता है। ये प्रतिनिधि स्थानीय स्तर पर निर्णय लेने, बजट आवंटन और शासन में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाते हैं।

2. **शक्तियों का हस्तांतरण :** विकेंद्रीकरण का सिद्धांत इन संस्थानों के कामकाज के केंद्र में है। पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों को शक्तियां और जिम्मेदारियां सौंपी जाती हैं, जिससे उन्हें स्थानीय मुद्दों को संबोधित करने, विकास परियोजनाओं की योजना बनाने और उन्हें लागू करने और स्थानीय संसाधनों का प्रबंधन करने का अधिकार मिलता है।

3. **वित्तीय स्वायत्तता :** हालाँकि वित्तीय स्वायत्तता की एक डिग्री है, पीआरआई अक्सर राज्य और केंद्र सरकारों सहित सरकार के उच्च स्तर से अनुदान पर बहुत अधिक निर्भर करते हैं। बाहरी फंडिंग पर यह निर्भरता विकास परियोजनाओं को स्वतंत्र रूप से शुरू करने की उनकी क्षमता को प्रभावित कर सकती है।

4. **सेवा वितरण :** स्थानीय शासन निकाय नागरिकों को शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य देखभाल, जल आपूर्ति, स्वच्छता और बुनियादी ढांचे के विकास सहित आवश्यक सेवाएं प्रदान करने के लिए जिम्मेदार हैं। हालाँकि, सेवा वितरण की गुणवत्ता और प्रभावशीलता बिहार के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में भिन्न हो सकती है।

5. **सामुदायिक भागीदारी :** स्थानीय शासन के मूलभूत सिद्धांतों में से एक निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रियाओं में सामुदायिक भागीदारी को प्रोत्साहित करना है। पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों से अपेक्षा की जाती है कि वे स्थानीय योजना और विकास पहल में नागरिकों को शामिल करें।

स्थानीय शासन की वर्तमान स्थिति में चुनौतियाँ :

पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों के अस्तित्व के बावजूद, कई चुनौतियाँ बिहार में स्थानीय शासन के प्रभावी कामकाज में बाधा डालती हैं—

1. **सीमित वित्तीय स्वायत्तता :** सरकार के उच्च स्तर से अनुदान और धन पर निर्भरता के कारण पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों की वित्तीय स्वायत्तता बाधित रहती है। यह निर्भरता विकास गतिविधियों को कुशलतापूर्वक चलाने की उनकी क्षमता में बाधा डाल सकती है।
2. **प्रशासनिक क्षमता :** कई स्थानीय सरकारी अधिकारियों के पास शासन की जटिल मांगों को प्रभावी ढंग से प्रबंधित करने के लिए आवश्यक प्रशिक्षण और क्षमता का अभाव है। इसके परिणामस्वरूप नौकरशाही अक्षमताएँ और सेवा वितरण में देरी हो सकती है।
3. **राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेप :** स्थानीय शासन संस्थाएँ राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेप के प्रति संवेदनशील होती हैं, जो अक्सर शक्तिशाली राजनीतिक अभिनेताओं द्वारा संचालित होती हैं। यह हस्तक्षेप संसाधनों और निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रिया को समुदाय की वास्तविक जरूरतों से दूर कर सकता है।
4. **भ्रष्टाचार :** स्थानीय स्तर पर भ्रष्टाचार एक व्यापक मुद्दा बना हुआ है, जो विकास परियोजनाओं के लिए निर्धारित संसाधनों का उपयोग कर रहा है और स्थानीय शासन प्रयासों की प्रभावशीलता को कम कर रहा है।
5. **संसाधन आवंटन असमानताएँ:** बिहार के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में संसाधनों के आवंटन में महत्वपूर्ण असमानताएँ हैं, जो विकास परिणामों में असमानताओं को बढ़ा सकती हैं।

स्थानीय शासन में चुनौतियाँ :

बिहार में स्थानीय शासन के सामने आने वाली चुनौतियों की विस्तृत जांच से बिहार में स्थानीय शासन में बहुमुखी चुनौतियों का पता चलता है। कई अन्य क्षेत्रों की तरह, बिहार को भी स्थानीय शासन में कई चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ता है जो इसकी विकासात्मक प्रगति में बाधा डालती हैं। गहराई तक व्याप्त और बहुआयामी ये चुनौतियाँ जमीनी स्तर पर प्रभावी शासन में बाधा डालने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती हैं। इन चुनौतियों को जानना यह समझने के लिए महत्वपूर्ण है कि बिहार संघर्षशील राज्य है।

सुझाव :

बिहार में प्रभावी स्थानीय शासन और विकेंद्रीकरण की दिशा में यात्रा को सुविधाजनक बनाने के लिए, नीति निर्माताओं और हितधारकों द्वारा विचार के लिए निम्नलिखित ठोस सिफारिशें पेश की गई हैं—

1. **नीतिगत सुधार :** बिहार को विकेंद्रीकरण के सिद्धांतों के साथ संरेखित करने के लिए अपने कानूनी और नीतिगत ढांचे की व्यापक समीक्षा करनी चाहिए। नई शासन संरचनाओं और प्रक्रियाओं को समायोजित करने के लिए पुराने कानूनों और विनियमों में संशोधन किया जाना चाहिए।
2. **क्षमता निर्माण :** शासन, वित्तीय प्रबंधन, परियोजना योजना और कार्यान्वयन पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हुए स्थानीय सरकारी अधिकारियों के लिए क्षमता निर्माण कार्यक्रमों में निवेश करें। इन कार्यक्रमों को विभिन्न क्षेत्रों और शासन के स्तरों की विशिष्ट आवश्यकताओं के अनुरूप तैयार करें।
3. **राजकोषीय स्वायत्तता :** स्थानीय निकायों की वित्तीय स्वायत्तता बढ़ाने के लिए स्थानीय राजस्व उत्पन्न करने के रास्ते तलाशें। स्थानीय सरकारों को कर और शुल्क लगाने,

स्थानीय संसाधनों से राजस्व एकत्र करने और राज्य स्तरीय राजस्व के बड़े हिस्से तक पहुंचने के लिए सशक्त बनाना।

4. **पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही :** भ्रष्टाचार से निपटने और पारदर्शिता को बढ़ावा देने के लिए डिजिटल रिकॉर्ड—कीपिंग, ऑनलाइन प्रोजेक्ट ट्रैकिंग और बजट और व्यय के सार्वजनिक प्रकटीकरण जैसे उपायों को लागू करें। सामाजिक लेखापरीक्षा जैसे तंत्रों के माध्यम से निगरानी और निरीक्षण में नागरिक भागीदारी को प्रोत्साहित करें।
5. **सामुदायिक जुड़ाव :** जागरूकता, शिक्षा और नियमित सार्वजनिक परामर्श को बढ़ावा देने सहित स्थानीय शासन में नागरिक जुड़ाव बढ़ाने के लिए तंत्र बनाएं। सामुदायिक आवश्यकताओं की वकालत करने के लिए स्थानीय स्तर की समितियों और संघों के गठन को प्रोत्साहित करें।
6. **लिंग समावेशिता :** नीतियों और कार्यक्रमों के माध्यम से पीआरआई और शहरी स्थानीय निकायों में महिलाओं की सक्रिय भागीदारी को बढ़ावा देना। महिलाओं के प्रतिनिधित्व और नेतृत्व की भूमिकाओं को प्रोत्साहित करें, और स्थानीय योजना में लिंग-उत्तरदायी बजट को एकीकृत करें।
7. **अंतर-सरकारी सहयोग :** निर्बाध सेवा वितरण और संसाधन आवंटन सुनिश्चित करने के लिए स्थानीय निकायों, जिला प्रशासन और राज्य स्तरीय विभागों के बीच सहयोग और समन्वय को बढ़ावा देना।
8. **सफल मॉडलों से सीखें :** बिहार की स्थानीय शासन पहल को बढ़ाने के लिए प्रेरणा और व्यावहारिक अंतर्दृष्टि प्राप्त करते

हुए, अन्य क्षेत्रों या देशों के सफल विकेंद्री. त शासन मॉडल का अध्ययन करें और उन्हें अपनाएं।

इन सिफारिशों, को लागू करके, बिहार प्रभावी स्थानीय शासन की नींव रख सकता है जो समुदायों को सशक्त बनाता है, जवाबदेही को बढ़ावा देता है और सतत विकास को बढ़ावा देता है। बिहार के विकास का भविष्य उसके विकेंद्री. त शासन प्रयासों की सफलता से अविभाज्य रूप से जुड़ा हुआ है, और ठोस कार्रवाई के साथ, राज्य अपनी पूरी क्षमता का एहसास कर सकता है और अपने नागरिकों को एक उज्ज्वल भविष्य प्रदान कर सकता है।

निष्कर्ष :

निष्कर्षतः, प्रभावी स्थानीय शासन बिहार के विकास की आधारशिला है। इस शोध ने राज्य में स्थानीय शासन से संबंधित चुनौतियाँ, संभावनाओं और रणनीतियों पर प्रकाश डाला है। यह स्पष्ट है कि सतत विकास की दिशा में बिहार की यात्रा काफी हद तक इसकी स्थानीय शासन प्रणालियों की ताकत और प्रभावशीलता पर निर्भर करती है। बिहार के सामने भ्रष्टाचार, कमजोर प्रशासनिक क्षमता, राजनीतिक हस्तक्षेप और अपर्याप्त संसाधनों सहित चुनौतियाँ विकट हैं, लेकिन दुर्गम नहीं हैं। स्थानीय सरकारों को सशक्त बनाने और निर्णय लेने की प्रक्रियाओं में समुदायों को शामिल करके इन चुनौतियों का समाधान करने के लिए विकेंद्रीकरण एक शक्तिशाली उपकरण के रूप में उभरता है।

बिहार में विकेंद्रीकरण की संभावनाएँ केवल सैद्धांतिक नहीं हैं; वे परिवर्तन के लिए एक व्यावहारिक मार्ग प्रदान करते हैं। राजकोषीय स्वायत्तता को मजबूत करके, प्रशासनिक क्षमता

बढ़ाकर, पारदर्शिता और जवाबदेही को बढ़ावा देकर और सामुदायिक सहभागिता को बढ़ावा देकर, बिहार समावेशी और सतत विकास को चलाने के लिए स्थानीय शासन की पूरी क्षमता का उपयोग कर सकता है।

हालाँकि, विकेंद्रीकरण को बढ़ावा देने और इन चुनौतियों पर काबू पाने की जिम्मेदारी केवल नीति निर्माताओं की नहीं है। यह एक साझा प्रयास है जिसके लिए नीति निर्माताओं, नागरिक समाज संगठनों और बिहार के नागरिकों के बीच सक्रिय सहयोग की आवश्यकता है। केवल सामूहिक प्रयासों के माध्यम से ही राज्य वास्तव में अपनी क्षमता को उजागर कर सकता है और समृद्धि और समान विकास की राह पर आगे बढ़ सकता है।

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भारत में लोकतंत्र को मजबूत करने में नागरिक समाज की भूमिका

केश्वर प्रसाद भारती*

आलेख सार

बख्शी— संकट को परिभाषित ऐसी स्थिति के लिए करते हैं जिसमें एक सामाजिक ढांचा किसी समस्या के समाधान हेतु उस व्यवस्था को बनाए रखने के लिए जरूरी संभावनाओं से कम संभावनाएं पनपने देता है। जब लोग बदलाव चाहे मगर इसके लिए कोशिश करने या उसे हासिल करने में असमर्थ हैं तो यहीं पर संकट का विचार उभरता है।

“संकट कोई स्थिति नहीं है, बल्कि यह काम न कर सकने की अक्षमता है।”

बख्शी द्वारा चिन्हित विभिन्न संकटों में पहला और सबसे महत्वपूर्ण है “कानून के औचित्य का संकट”।

शब्द कुंजी— नागरिक, समाज, न्यायापालिका, शक्ति, प्रोत्साहन, पी.यू.सी.एल.

कानून का शासन जो भारत के संवैधानिक लोकतंत्र का आधार है, आज संकट में है। इस संकट से निजात पाने के लिए जल्द उपाय करने के बारे में देश में सर्वसम्मति है या नहीं, इसे जानने के लिए किसी जनमत संग्रह की जरूरत नहीं है। इस संकट से उबारना सरकार की प्रमुख जिम्मेदारी है, जिसे सरकार को सजग नागरिकों के सहयोग से अंजाम देना चाहिए।

संविधान के अनु-14 के तहत कानून की रक्षा का समान अधिकार सिर्फ तब हकीकत बन सकता है, जब हमारे समाज के गरीब और कमजोर तबकों को उनके अधिकारों और हक के बारे में जागरूक बनाया जाए। दुर्भाग्यवश भारत में इसका अभाव है। भारतीय कानूनी व्यवस्था और उसकी जटिलताएं अधिकांश भारतीयों यहाँ तक कि तथाकथित शहरी लोगों के लिए एक रहस्य है। कम पढ़े-लिखे लोगों के लिए भी एक रहस्य है। कम पढ़े लिखे लोगों के लिए तो कानून सिर्फ अदालत के कक्ष और वकीलों के कार्यालयों तक ही सीमित है। इसी का नतीजा है कि इन दिनों कानून और वर्तमान व्यवस्था का उपयोग खासकर अमीर, और शक्तिशाली लोगों द्वारा और अमीर व शक्तिशाली बनने के लिए किया जा रहा है, जबकि सामान्य लोग न्याय से वंचित किये जा रहे हैं।

नागरिक समाज आम लोगों को उनके अधिकारों और कर्तव्यों के बारे में जागरूक बनाने की प्रक्रिया में आवाज देने का काम करती है। माना जाता है कि Civil Society अन्याय और प्रताड़ना के खिलाफ आवाज उठाने के लिए आम लोगों में विश्वास और साहस का संचार करने का काम कराती है। कानूनी रूप से सचेत समाज यह सुनिश्चित करता है कि आम लोग उपलब्ध चीजों और अपने अधिकारों के प्रति सजग हो।

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Civil Society एक बेहद जटिल विचार है इसलिए इस पद की सभी के लिए स्वीकृत कोई परिभाषा नहीं है। लेकिन सामान्य समझ यह है कि Civil Society आम लोगों को खुद से जोड़ती है। उनके हक में बोलती है और उस सामाजिक क्षेत्र का प्रतिनिधित्व करती है जो न तो सरकारी व्यवस्था का हिस्सा है और न ही बाजार का। सरकारी तंत्र की दमनकारी या नियामक शक्तियों और बाजार की ताकतों की आर्थिक शक्तियों से अलग सता रखते हुए Civil Society अपने Network में आनेवाले लोगों को सामाजिक शक्ति प्रदान करती है। Civil Society अपने विचारों, जानकारीयों, सेवाओं और विशेषज्ञताओं का उपयोग सरकार और बाजार पर दबाव बनाकर आम लोगों के हितों की रक्षा और बेहतरी के लिए करती है। यह एक ऐसा क्षेत्र है, जहाँ लोग लोकहित को देखते हुए सामूहिक हितों से जुड़े कार्यों में हिस्सा लेने के लिए आमंत्रित होते हैं।

भारतीय संविधान सभा के सदस्यों ने बहुत ही सोंच कर संसदीय लोकतंत्र को अपनाया था कि भारत में अनेकता में एकता स्थापित करने में सफल होगा। जबकि दुनिया के अनेक लोकतांत्रिक देशों ने इसकी सफलता पर संदेह जताया था। अमेरिका की तरह भारत ने भी लोकप्रिय बहुमत पर आधारित संविधान को अपनाया। इसलिए संवैधानिक व्यवस्था के दायरे में Civil Society की एक भूमिका है।

भारत में कई गैर सरकारी संगठन (NGO) लोकतंत्र के प्रहरी के रूप में काम करते हैं। वे लोगों के अधिकारों की रक्षा के लिए प्रयास करते हैं और चुनावी तथा कार्यकारी कारगुजारियों का खुलासा और उसे नियंत्रित करने की कोशिश भी करते हैं। NGO द्वारा लम्बे संघर्ष के बाद सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने 2003 में उम्मीदवारों के लिए वित्तीय

परिसम्पत्तियों, शैक्षिक पृष्ठभूमि और आपराधिक रिकार्ड का खुलासा करना बाध्यकारी बना दिया। भारत के चुनाव आयोग ने चुनाव प्रक्रिया में पारदर्शिता बढ़ाने के लिए NGO और अन्य नागरिक समूहों के साथ बातचीत करने की शुरुआत की। इसके परिणामस्वरूप प्रमुख संगठनों ने मतदाता सूचियों को अपडेट करने में बड़ी भूमिका निभाई। दूसरे स्तर पर कुछ NGO ने उम्मीदवारों के साथ मिलकर उन्हें लोगों की जरूरतों के प्रति संवेदनशील बनाने का प्रयास किया। भारत के प्रमुख NGO में एक RLEK (Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra) के प्रयासों की तारीफ करते हुए सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने कहा था :-

RLEK द्वारा किए गए प्रयासों की हमें अवश्य प्रशंसा करनी चाहिए। इसके प्रयास के बिना इस क्षेत्र में जो कुछ हुआ है वह शायद संभव नहीं है।

भारतीय लोकतंत्र को और अधिक व्यवस्थित, अर्थपूर्ण, प्रतिनिधित्वपूर्ण और साफ सुथरा बनाने के लिए Civil Society की भागीदारी और सशक्तीकरण जरूरी है क्योंकि यह एक माध्यम का काम कर सकता है जिसके जरिए शासित यानि जनता संगठित, एकत्रित होने के साथ साथ ही सरकारी क्रियाकलापों और समाज से जुड़े अन्य मसलों पर बातचीत और उसकी आलोचना कर सकती है।

Civil Society बहुसंख्यक की भागीदारी का रास्ता साफ करती है यह खासियत उसे राजनीतिक समाज और सरकारी संस्थाओं से अलग करती है।

नागरिक समाज एक रास्ता है जिसके जरिए नीतिगत परिवर्तनों के लिए नियमित रूप से राजनीतिक समूहों और सत्ता पर दबाव बना

सकते हैं। यह एक तरह का सार्वजनिक मंच उपलब्ध कराती है जिसमें अलग-अलग समाज के लोग हिस्सा ले सकते हैं।

Civil Society एक ऐसा माध्यम है जिसके जरिए विभिन्न जातीय, धार्मिक और राजनीतिक समूह वगैर हिंसा और अतिवादी तरीकों का सहारा लिए समाधान पर चर्चा करते हैं।

भारत में उभरती **Civil Society** लोकतंत्र के लिए जरूरी है, क्योंकि स्वतंत्र मीडिया जानकारी उपलब्ध कराकर लोगों का भला कर सकता है। यह सरकार और अन्य संगठनों से सरकारी जुड़ाव और उसके गलत कार्यों की सूचना के जरिए लोगों को उसकी जानकारी दे सकता है। यह विभिन्न समूहों के लिए सरकार और राजनीतिक दलों के लोगों पर लगाम लगाने का अच्छा तरीका है। **Civil Society** उन स्तरों पर सेवाएं उपलब्ध करा सकती है। जहाँ सरकार नहीं पहुँच सकती। आर.एल.ई.के., बंधुआ मुक्ति मोर्चा, पी.यू.सी.एल. आदि **Civil Society** के उदाहरण हैं।

भारत में सिविल सोसायटी के विकास के लिए कानूनी व्यवस्था : विकास के लिए काम करने वाले संगठनों को भारतीय कानून तीन हिस्सों में बाँटते हैं। चौरिटेबल ट्रस्ट, सोसायटीज और सेक्सन 25 कम्पनीज। भले ही ट्रस्ट सोसायटी या कम्पनी किसी भी रूप में पंजीकृत हो वे 1860 के सोसायटीज रजि० एक्ट और 1961 के आयकर अधिनियम के तहत ही आते हैं। ट्रस्ट, पब्लिक ट्रस्ट एक्ट (1876) के तहत आते हैं और संघीय कानूनों के अलावा वे चौरटी कमिशनर के राज्य कार्यालय से भी शासित होते हैं। जिन संगठनों को विदेशी कोष मिल रहा है उन्हें 1966 के Foreign Contribution Regulating Act के प्रावधानों का पालन करना होता है और उनका

नियमन गृह मंत्रालय द्वारा होता है। आयकर कानून के तहत सरकार स्वयंसेवी संगठनों को मुख्य रूप से तीन तरह से कर छूट देती है।

- **सेक्शन 80 जी :** इसके तहत खास क्षेत्र में काम करने वाले स्वयं-सेवी संगठन चौरिटेबल माने जाते हैं और आयकर अर्थॉरिटी के साथ उनका पंजीकरण जरूरी होता है। इससे दानदाता (व्यक्ति या कंपनी) दान की रकम के 50% पर कर छूट का दावा कर सकता है यह रकम दानदाता की आय का 10% तक ही हो सकती है।
- **सेक्शन 35 (1-3) :** इसके तहत स्वीकृत वैज्ञानिक शोध संगठनों जैसे विश्वविद्यालयों, कॉलेजों, या अन्य वैज्ञानिक शोध संगठनों को समाज विज्ञान या सांख्यिकीय शोध के लिए दी गई रकम पर 100% छूट मिलती है।
- **सेक्शन 35 Act** इसके तहत दान पर 100 प्रतिशत छूट मिलती है। लेकिन इसके आवेदन प्रोजेक्ट विशेष खासकर शोध प्रोजेक्ट के लिए होते हैं न कि संगठनों के लिए। इसके सेक्शन के तहत लाभ उठाने के लिए संगठन को खुद प्रोजेक्ट का क्रियान्वयन करना होता है। किसी संगठन को इसके लिए नई दिल्ली स्थित **National Committee** वित्त **Promotion of Social and Economics Welfare** से स्वीकृत लेनी होती है। **Integrated Rural Development Program** जैसी सरकारी विकास एजेंसियों को मिलनेवाले दान पर इस सेक्शन के तहत 100% छूट मिलती है।
- **सरकारी पहल :** सरकार ने **NGO (Ex. Khadi and Village Industries co-operation, Welfare board Central**

Social National Westland Development Board, etc.) के वित्त पोषण को बढ़ावा देने के लिए कई कदम उठाए हैं। इससे इन संगठनों की सरकार पर निर्भरता बढ़ी है। इस तरह के वित्त पोषण पर निर्भरता से NGO की स्वायत्तता खत्म होने और उनके सरकारी प्रोजेक्ट के क्रियान्वयन के मामले में महज क्रियान्वनकर्ता बन जाने का खतरा भी पैदा होता है।

भारत के योजना आयोग ने 1984 में एक दस्तावेज जारी किया था जिसका नाम था— "Action plan to bring about collaborative relationship between voluntary organization and government" इस दस्तावेज के अनुसार, एनजीओ का उद्देश्य गरीबों, के सशक्तिकरण के लिए उन्हें जागरूक और संगठित करना, चुप्पी और निर्भरता की संस्कृति को तोड़ना और समाज के सबसे निचले तबके के लोगों की भूमिका को नियोजित विकास प्रक्रिया में निष्क्रिय से सक्रिय बनाना है। इसके अनुसार एनजीओ को सामुदायिक वनरोपण, शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य और अन्य तरह की सेवाओं के संचालन की जिम्मेदारी दी जाती है।

इन बदलावों और विकास के कारण भारत में एनजीओ सेक्टर की काफी तरक्की हुई। दसवीं पंचवर्षीय योजना ने इस सेक्टर को और मजबूत किया है। जिसमें लिखा है बाजार उदारवाद और वैश्वीकरण की स्वीकृति से उम्मीद की जा रही है कि सरकार उन क्षेत्रों में बाजार और Civil Society के प्रभाव को मान लेगी। जहाँ उसका अभी तक प्रत्यक्ष लेकिन अकुशल और अप्रभावी दखल है। इसके तहत एनजीओ को सरकार की भूमिका के विकास में सहयोग देनेवाला बताया गया है। जहाँ Civil Society के पास शायद बेहतर संस्थागत क्षमता है। इसके साथ ही

मार्केट के विकास और जागरूक तथा संवेदनशील Civil Society की उपस्थिति के साथ ही कई सारे विकास कार्य जो सामाजिक व्यवस्था को स्थायित्व प्रदान करते हैं, का क्रियान्वयन मार्केट और Civil Society से जुड़े संगठनों द्वारा बढ़ चढ़कर किया जाने लगा है। इसका मतलब है कि मार्केट और सिविल सोसाइटी के क्षेत्रों और प्रभाव का विस्तार सरकारी प्रभाव में कमी की कीमत पर हो रहा है। इसी को ध्यान में रखकर दसवीं योजना में स्वयंसेवी संगठनों की भूमिका को मजबूत किया गया है और विकास प्रक्रिया में उन्हें सहायोगी बनाया गया है।

निष्कर्ष : लोकतंत्र को मजबूती देने में Civil Society की अहम भूमिका है। इसे सरकार और व्यावसायिक हितों का मुकाबला करने के लिए स्वायत्त और सक्षम होने की जरूरत है। एक मजबूत और विश्वसनीय सिविल सोसाइटी लोगों तथा समुदाय के हितों का प्रतिनिधित्व कर सकती है। यह सरकारी शक्ति को एक तरह से नियंत्रित करती है। एशिया की लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्थाओं में सिविल सोसाइटी की भूमिका लगातार प्रभावी होती जा रही है। भविष्य में लोकतांत्रिक मजबूती के लिए यह अधिक मजबूत, स्वायत्त और अर्थपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगी। लोगों में राजनीतिक जागरूकता पैदा करने और अपने हितों की रक्षा के लिए उन्हें राजनीतिक प्रक्रिया में हिस्सेदारी के लिए प्रोत्साहित करने में सिविल सोसाइटी से जुड़े संगठन अधिक सक्रिय भूमिका निभाएंगे।

इन प्रयासों के जरिए सरकार लोगों की जरूरतों के प्रति अधिक जिम्मेदार बन सकेगी और अभिजात्यों के साथ ही आम लोग भी लोकतंत्र के प्रति अधिक प्रतिबद्ध होंगे। इस तरह लोकतांत्रिक मजबूती के लक्ष्य हासिल किया जा सकेगा।

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भारत और थाईलैंड के संबंधों में बिम्सटेक की भूमिका

डॉ० रुचि त्रिपाठी *
रेनू कुमारी **

आलेख सार

वर्तमान वैश्विक परिदृश्य में राष्ट्रों के मध्य संबंध स्थापित करने हेतु अनेक क्षेत्रीय और उप-क्षेत्रीय संगठनों की स्थापना की गई है, जैसे कि— दक्षिण-पूर्व एशियाई देशों का संगठन (आसियान), मेकांग गंगा सहयोग, यूरोपीय संघ, अफ्रीका संघ तथा बहु-पक्षीय क्षेत्रीय तकनीकी और आर्थिक सहयोग के लिए बंगाल की खाड़ी पहल अर्थात् बिम्सटेक इत्यादि। इन सभी क्षेत्रीय और उप-क्षेत्रीय संगठनों ने राष्ट्रों के मध्य बहुपक्षीय संबंधों के साथ-साथ द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को भी बेहतर और मजबूत बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई है। नई शक्तियों के उदय और पारंपरिक शक्तियों की वापसी के साथ अंतर्राष्ट्रीय प्रणाली में बदलती गतिशीलता बंगाल की खाड़ी क्षेत्र में भी संबंधों को फिर से परिभाषित कर रही है। यही कारण है कि वर्तमान में बिम्सटेक एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रीय संगठन के रूप में उभरा है, जिसने सदस्य देशों के बीच बहुपक्षीय संबंधों के साथ द्विपक्षीय संबंध को स्थापित करने में भी अपनी भूमिका निभाई है। प्रस्तुत शोध-पत्र भारत और थाईलैंड के मध्य स्थापित द्विपक्षीय संबंधों में बिम्सटेक की भूमिका का विश्लेषण करेगा। भारत और थाईलैंड दोनों ही बिम्सटेक के संस्थापक सदस्यों में से एक हैं तथा पिछले एक वर्ष पूर्व ही दोनों देशों ने अपने राजनयिक संबंधों के 75 वर्ष पूर्ण किए हैं। इस सहयोग की परिकल्पना बंगाल की खाड़ी के तटीय देशों के बीच आर्थिक सहयोग के प्रवर्तक के रूप में की गई थी, जिसमें भारत और थाईलैंड दो प्रमुख शक्ति हैं। वर्तमान में बिम्सटेक की अध्यक्षता थाईलैंड के पास है, जिसने अपनी नीतियों के द्वारा इस समूह के सदस्यों को और करीब लाने में प्रमुख भूमिका निभाई है।

शब्द कुंजी— भारत, थाईलैंड, विदेश नीति, द्विपक्षीय संबंध, बिम्सटेक, मेकांग गंगा सहयोग, कूटनीति, लुक ईस्ट नीति, लुक वेस्ट नीति।

प्रस्तावना—

दक्षिण एशिया में एक प्रमुख अभिनेता होने के कारण प्रारंभ से ही भारत की विदेश नीति अपने पड़ोसी प्रथम नीति और पूर्व की ओर देखो नीति को बढ़ावा देते हुए अपने पड़ोसियों के प्रति मैत्रीपूर्ण रही है। अपनी विदेश नीति के तहत भारत अपने पड़ोसी देशों के साथ निरंतर आपसी सहयोग और बहुपक्षीय साझेदारी के माध्यम से क्षेत्रीय संबंधों को बढ़ावा देने की कोशिश करता आ रहा है। भारत

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का थाईलैंड के साथ संबंध विदेश नीति की इसी दूरदर्शिता का परिणाम है। एक दूसरे के विस्तारित पड़ोस में स्थित भारत और थाईलैंड अंडमान सागर में समुद्री सीमा साझा करते हैं। वर्ष 2022 के अगस्त में भारतीय विदेश मंत्री एस जयशंकर ने थाईलैंड का दौरा किया और तत्कालीन थाई प्रधानमंत्री प्रयुत चान-ओ-चा के साथ मिलकर स्वास्थ्य देखभाल और चिकित्सा अनुसंधान जैसे दो महत्वपूर्ण समझौतों पर हस्ताक्षर किया। यह दोनों देशों के मध्य द्विपक्षीय संबंधों के 75 वर्ष पूरे होने का एक महत्वपूर्ण क्षण था।

थाईलैंड के साथ भारत के द्विपक्षीय संबंध का इतिहास, सदियों पुराने सामाजिक और सांस्कृतिक संबंधों और व्यापक लोगों के मध्य सम्पर्कों पर आधारित है। बौद्ध धर्म का साझा संबंध बड़ी संख्या में थाई लोगों द्वारा भारत में बौद्ध रुचि के स्थानों की नियमित तीर्थयात्राओं में परिलक्षित होता है। स्वतंत्रता के पश्चात् थाईलैंड भारत को मान्यता देने वाले प्रमुख देशों में से एक था। इसके बाद से ही दोनों देशों के मध्य राजनयिक संबंध स्थापित हो गए थे। हालाँकि शीत युद्ध के दौरान थाईलैंड के सयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका के साथ शामिल होने के कारण दोनों देशों के मध्य संबंधों में दूरी आ गई थी, परंतु 1986 में राजीव गाँधी के थाईलैंड दौरे के पश्चात् दोनों के संबंध फिर से सामान्य होने लगे। 1989 में थाईलैंड के प्रधानमंत्री चातिचाई चून्वाहन ने भारत की यात्रा की और शीतयुद्ध के मैदानों को बाजार में बदलने का वादा किया। उनका ये दौरा दोनों देशों के मध्य संबंधों को बेहतर बनाने में अत्यंत कारगर साबित हुआ।

गाँधी और चातिचाई ने मिलकर भारत-थाईलैंड संयुक्त आयोग की स्थापना की, जिसने दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया में भारतीय कूटनीति को बढ़ावा देने वाली

पूर्व की ओर देखो नीति को बढ़ावा दिया। इस नीति का निर्माण वैश्विकरण के कठोर परिणामों के मध्य भारतीय आर्थिक प्रदर्शन को बढ़ावा देने के लिए किया गया था, जिसे वर्तमान में एक्ट ईस्ट पॉलिसी के रूप में रूपांतरित किया गया है। 1997 में थाईलैंड द्वारा अपनाई गई लुक वेस्ट नीति भारत की लुक ईस्ट नीति की पूरक है, जिसने दोनों देशों के मध्य द्विपक्षीय संबंधों के ठोस उन्नयन के लिए आधार प्रदान किया है। वर्तमान में भारत और थाईलैंड का सहयोग आसियान और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया से भी आगे तक फैला हुआ है। दोनों बड़े पैमाने पर क्षेत्रीय सहयोग पहलों और क्षेत्रीय मंचों से जुड़े हुए हैं, जिनमें भारत-आसियान शिखर सम्मेलन, पूर्वी एशिया शिखर सम्मेलन, मेकांग गंगा सहयोग, बहु-क्षेत्रीय तकनीकी और आर्थिक सहयोग के लिए बंगाल की खाड़ी पहल और हिंद महासागर रिम एसोसिएशन शामिल हैं। इन सभी क्षेत्रीय और उप-क्षेत्रीय संगठनों ने दोनों देशों के मध्य संबंधों को बेहतर बनाने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका का निर्वहन किया है।

भारत और थाईलैंड के संबंधों में बिम्सटेक की भूमिका—

बांग्लादेश-भारत-श्रीलंका-थाईलैंड आर्थिक सहयोग (बीआईएसटी-ईसी) स्थापित करने की पहल 1994 में थाईलैंड द्वारा बंगाल की खाड़ी के आस-पास समूहित दक्षिण पूर्व और दक्षिण एशिया के देशों को शामिल करते हुए उप-क्षेत्रीय आधार पर आर्थिक सहयोग का पता लगाने के लिए की गई थी। इसी आधार पर बहु-क्षेत्रीय तकनीकी और आर्थिक सहयोग के लिए बंगाल की खाड़ी पहल अर्थात् बिम्सटेक की स्थापना 6 जून, 1997 को बैंकॉक घोषणा के माध्यम से की गई थी। यह एक उप-क्षेत्रीय संगठन है जो सदस्य देशों के

बीच साझा हितों में आर्थिक विकास और आपसी सहयोग को बढ़ावा देता है। दक्षिण एशिया के पांच राज्यों (बांग्लादेश, भूटान, भारत, नेपाल और श्रीलंका) और दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया के दो देशों (म्यांमार और थाईलैंड) से मिलकर बना यह संगठन दोनों क्षेत्रों के बीच एक पुल के रूप में कार्य करके क्षेत्रीय एकीकरण को सक्षम बनाता है। भौगोलिक निकटता और प्रसार, प्राकृतिक संसाधनों और अपने सदस्य देशों की विशाल श्रम शक्ति के संदर्भ में यह एक अद्वितीय क्षेत्रीय सहयोग पहल है। इसके साथ ही यह संगठन सदस्य देशों के मध्य द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को बेहतर बनाने में भी भूमिका निभा रहा है। अपनी स्थापना के शुरुआती दौर में संगठन नरम और धीमा था, लेकिन संगठन की बढ़ती क्षमता और इसकी रणनीतिक प्रासंगिकता के कारण इसे मजबूती मिली और वर्तमान में यह संगठन एक महत्वपूर्ण और शक्तिशाली क्षेत्रीय संगठन के रूप में सामने आया है।

बिस्मटेक आसियान के साथ अपने संबंधों को बेहतर करने के साथ ही बंगाल की खाड़ी क्षेत्र में भारत के क्षेत्रीय सहयोग को पुनर्जीवित करता है। भारत अपने भौगोलिक क्षेत्र, अर्थव्यवस्था और जनसंख्या के आधार पर बिस्मटेक का सबसे बड़ा देश है, इस कारण इस संगठन में भारत की भूमिका अन्य देशों से कहीं अधिक बढ़ जाती है। भारत के लिए, बिस्मटेक का रणनीतिक महत्व उसकी विदेश नीति का सार है। भारत की लुक ईस्ट और एक्ट ईस्ट दोनों नीतियों को एक साथ लाते हुए, बिस्मटेक बंगाल की खाड़ी क्षेत्र में भारत के सभ्यतागत, रणनीतिक और आर्थिक हित को आगे बढ़ाता है, इसके साथ ही बिस्मटेक देशों की सक्रिय भागीदारी के साथ सहयोग की विशिष्ट क्षेत्रों की पहचान भी करता है। बंगाल की खाड़ी

विश्व की सबसे बड़ी खाड़ी है जो रणनीतिक रूप से हिंद महासागर और प्रशांत महासागर को जोड़ने के साथ ही मलक्का जलडमरूमध्य के लिए एक जुड़ाव के रूप में कार्य करती है। वैश्विक व्यापार का एक चौथाई हिस्सा सहित प्राकृतिक गैस भंडार जैसे ऊर्जा स्रोतों के संसाधनों से परिपूर्ण यह क्षेत्र भारत के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण है, जिसको सुरक्षित रखना भारत के लिए अति आवश्यक है। बिस्मटेक का महत्व इसके क्षेत्रीय एकीकरण और समुद्री सुरक्षा कारकों के कारण भी है, जहाँ भारत अपनी आर्थिक आवश्यकताओं की पूर्ति भी कर सकता है।

यह संगठन भारत की सागर (क्षेत्र में सभी के लिए सुरक्षा और विकास) पहल जैसी कनेक्टिविटी और विकास परियोजनाओं को भी सक्षम बनाता है जो हिंद महासागर क्षेत्र में सूचना, निगरानी उपायों और बढ़ी हुई क्षमताओं को साझा करने के माध्यम से आर्थिक, समुद्री और सुरक्षा सहयोग को मजबूत करता है। यह संगठन ऋण जाल जैसी रणनीतियों के माध्यम से बेल्ट एंड रोड इनिशिएटिव सहित विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में चीन की आक्रामक प्रकृति के साथ भारत को बहुपक्षीय रूप से चीन का मुकाबला करने में मदद करता है। जिसके लिए आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, सुरक्षा और समुद्री सहयोग की आवश्यकता है, जो इस संगठन के माध्यम से सक्षम हो पाया है। इसके अतिरिक्त बिस्मटेक इसके सदस्य देशों के साथ भारत के द्विपक्षीय संबंधों को मजबूत बनाने में अहम भूमिका निभा रहा है। बिस्मटेक भारत के पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों को बिस्मटेक देशों से जोड़कर भारत की पहले पड़ोसी नीति और एक्ट ईस्ट नीति को साकार करने के लिए एक मंच प्रदान करता है। पूर्वोत्तर में कनेक्टिविटी के बुनियादी ढांचे का महत्व इस बात पर है कि इन्हें उन

परियोजनाओं से जोड़ा जा रहा है जिनका बिम्सटेक बंगाल की खाड़ी क्षेत्र में सहयोग और कनेक्टिविटी में सुधार के लिए समर्थन कर रहा है। इस संदर्भ में पश्चिम बंगाल की राजधानी कोलकाता को अक्सर बिम्सटेक देशों के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण पुल के रूप में देखा जाता है, क्योंकि इसका श्यामा प्रसाद मुखर्जी बंदरगाह बांग्लादेश में मोंगला और चटगांव बंदरगाहों और म्यांमार में सितवे से जुड़ा हुआ है।

26 जनवरी 2012 में थाईलैंड के प्रधानमंत्री को गणतंत्र दिवस समारोह में मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में आमंत्रित किया गया था, जिसे द्विपक्षीय राजनयिक संबंधों के 65 वर्ष पूर्ण होने के रूप में भी देखा जा सकता है। इस यात्रा के दौरान दोनों पक्षों ने छह समझौतों पर हस्ताक्षर किए, जिनमें रक्षा, सुरक्षा से लेकर व्यापार, आतंकवाद और समुद्री डकैती से प्रतिस्पर्धा, माल, सेवाओं और निवेश में मुक्त व्यापार क्षेत्र शामिल हैं। भारत के साथ थाईलैंड के संबंध हिंद-प्रशांत क्षेत्र में उसके हितों के लिए अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण हैं। वर्ष 2024 फरवरी में 10वीं भारत-थाईलैंड संयुक्त आयोग की बैठक में दोनों देशों के विदेश मंत्रियों ने भाग लिया। इसमें कहा गया कि दोनों देशों के विदेश मंत्रियों जयशंकर और बहिधा-नुकारा ने आपसी हित के क्षेत्रीय और बहुपक्षीय मुद्दों पर भी विचारों का आदान-प्रदान किया। इस बैठक के दौरान दोनों मंत्रियों ने नई दिल्ली की एक्ट ईस्ट पॉलिसी और बैंकॉक की एक्ट ईस्ट पॉलिसी के मध्य तालमेल को देखते हुए भारत-थाईलैंड साझेदारी को मजबूत करने के प्रति अपनी प्रतिबद्धता व्यक्त की। विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा कि वर्तमान में भारत-थाईलैंड साझेदारी सहयोग के विभिन्न क्षेत्रों तक विस्तारित हो गई है और बहुआयामी पहलू हासिल कर चुकी है। बैठक में जयशंकर ने इंडो-पैसिफिक महासागर पहल के समुद्री

परिस्थितिकी स्तंभ का सह-नेतृत्व करने के थाईलैंड के फैसले का स्वागत किया। इस संबंध में भारतीय विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा, “दोनों मंत्रियों ने रक्षा और सुरक्षा, व्यापार और निवेश, कनेक्टिविटी, विज्ञान और प्रौद्योगिकी, स्वास्थ्य, संस्कृति और लोगों का आदान-प्रदान सहित द्विपक्षीय सहयोग के व्यापक क्षेत्रों में प्रगति की समीक्षा की।”

थाईलैंड के विदेश उप-मंत्री सिहासाक फुआंगकेटकेव ने कहा कि इससे भारत के साथ द्विपक्षीय संबंध मजबूत होने के साथ-साथ रणनीतिक साझेदारी की ओर बढ़ेंगे, जिससे क्षेत्रीय और वैश्विक दोनों स्तर पर इनके मध्य साझेदारी को बढ़ावा मिलेगा। पिछले दो दशकों में, नियमित राजनीतिक आदान-प्रदान, बढ़ते व्यापार और निवेश के साथ भारत और थाईलैंड के संबंध अब एक व्यापक साझेदारी के रूप में विकसित हो गए हैं। वर्तमान में थाईलैंड भारत के लिए दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया में चौथा सबसे बड़ा व्यापारिक भागीदार बन गया है और थाई वस्तुओं के लिए भारत दक्षिण एशिया के अन्य सभी देशों में शीर्ष पर है। बिना किसी द्विपक्षीय मुक्त व्यापार समझौते के दोनों के मध्य द्विपक्षीय व्यापार 2016 में 8 मिलियन डॉलर से बढ़कर 2021 तक 15 बिलियन डॉलर हो गया है। भारत से थाईलैंड को निर्यात की जाने वाली प्रमुख वस्तुओं में मोती, कीमती या अर्द्ध-कीमती पत्थर, समुद्री उत्पाद, दवाएँ और मसाले इत्यादि हैं। जबकि, भारत द्वारा थाईलैंड से आयातित प्रमुख वस्तुओं में वनस्पति तेल, प्लास्टिक कच्चे माल, कार्बनिक रसायन, मोती और कीमती पत्थर इत्यादि शामिल हैं।

आर्थिक सहयोग के अतिरिक्त, थाईलैंड के लिए संयुक्त सुरक्षा और आतंकवाद विरोधी सहयोग विशेष महत्व रखता है। दोनों ने द्विपक्षीय रक्षा

पहल स्थापित की है, जिसमें अधिकारी प्रशिक्षण, संयुक्त अभ्यास और सुरक्षा संवाद शामिल हैं। बिस्मटेक भारत की एक्ट ईस्ट और थाईलैंड की लुक वेस्ट आर्थिक नीतियों के साथ पूरी तरह मेल खाता है। यह व्यापार, बुनियादी ढाँचे और क्षेत्रीय कूटनीति दोनों के संदर्भ में आसियान को कनेक्टिविटी भी प्रदान करता है, जिसकी दोनों देशों को आवश्यकता है। बिस्मटेक के माध्यम से, भारत और थाईलैंड बुनियादी ढाँचे और प्रौद्योगिकी के माध्यम से नेतृत्व की भूमिका निभा रहे हैं। वाणिज्य, संस्कृति और कनेक्टिविटी को अक्सर भारत-थाईलैंड संबंधों के तीन प्रमुख स्तंभों के रूप में देखा जाता है। दोनों देश कनेक्टिविटी को एक प्रमुख नीति प्राथमिकता के तथ्य के रूप में देखते हैं। बिस्मटेक ढाँचे के तहत भारत और थाईलैंड भारत-म्यांमार-थाईलैंड त्रिपक्षीय राजमार्ग के माध्यम से क्षेत्रीय कनेक्टिविटी में सुधार पर निकट सहयोग कर रहे हैं। यह एक सीमा पार परिवहन जाल है जिसे भारत, म्यांमार और थाईलैंड सरकार द्वारा वित्तपोषित किया जा रहा है। इसके माध्यम से भारत को पूर्वोत्तर भारत से और म्यांमार के माध्यम से सड़क मार्ग से थाईलैंड से जोड़ा गया है, जिससे तीनों देशों के मध्य व्यापार, वाणिज्य और पर्यटन को बढ़ावा देने में मदद मिल रही है। आज कनेक्टिविटी के क्षेत्र में भारत और थाईलैंड के बीच सहयोग उनके द्विपक्षीय संबंधों में एक प्रमुख चालक के रूप में उभरा है। थाईलैंड ने 'समृद्ध, लचीला और मजबूत, खुला बिस्मटेक' के नारे के तहत श्रीलंका से बिस्मटेक की सदस्यता ली, जिसके बाद से इसे कनेक्टिविटी स्तंभ का नया नेता भी नामित किया गया है। थाईलैंड के द्वारा शुरू की गई 'कनेक्ट द कनेक्टिविटी' योजना का उद्देश्य बिस्मटेक सदस्यों को थाईलैंड, बांग्लादेश, भारत

और श्रीलंका से चलने वाले बंदरगाहों के नेटवर्क के माध्यम से जोड़ना है। थाईलैंड के साथ भारत, सबसे अधिक व्यापार मात्रा वाले दो बिस्मटेक देशों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है और भारत के साथ थाईलैंड संबंध इनकी विदेश नीति के तहत महान शक्तियों के लिए एक प्रमुख भू-राजनीतिक स्थान और दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया में एक महत्वपूर्ण रणनीतिक भागीदार बनने से लेकर व्यापक हिंद-प्रशांत में एक उभरते भागीदार बनने की ओर कदम बढ़ाया है। 22 जून 2023 को नई दिल्ली में रक्षा उत्पादन विभाग ने थाईलैंड प्रतिनिधिमंडल के लिए एक ब्रीफिंग की मेजबानी की, जिसमें भारतीय रक्षा उद्योगों ने अत्याधुनिक प्रदर्शन किया। जिसने द्विपक्षीय रक्षा सहयोग को बढ़ावा देने के साथ ही संयुक्त अनुसंधान, प्रौद्योगिकी हस्तांतरण और रणनीतिक साझेदारी का मार्ग प्रशस्त किया।

निष्कर्ष—

वर्तमान में भारत दक्षिण एशिया के राजनीतिक, आर्थिक और सैन्य शक्तियों के अंतर्गत एक महत्वपूर्ण शक्ति के रूप में उभरा है। वहीं थाईलैंड दक्षिण-पूर्व एशिया में दूसरी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था वाला प्रमुख देश है। दोनों देशों के बीच संबंध साझा किए गए प्राचीन संबंधों पर आधारित रहे हैं। आज भारत-थाईलैंड संबंध को सिर्फ सामाजिक-सांस्कृतिक संबंधों के नजरिए से नहीं देखा जाता है, बल्कि यह पहले से और अधिक व्यापक हो गया है। इनके मध्य संबंधों को व्यापक बनाने में काफी हद तक बिस्मटेक की भूमिका को देखा जाता है। इस संगठन के झंडे तले दोनों देश एक दूसरे के काफी करीब आए हैं। बिस्मटेक के माध्यम से दोनों देश आर्थिक सहयोग के साथ-साथ सुरक्षा सहयोग, समुद्री सुरक्षा, आतंकवाद, हथियारों की तस्करी और प्राकृतिक और मानव निर्मित आपदाओं के शमन से जुड़े हुए

हैं। दोनों पक्षों ने अपने संबंधों को बेहतर बनाने के लिए अधिकारी प्रशिक्षण, संयुक्त अभ्यास और सुरक्षा संवाद के जरिए द्विपक्षीय रक्षा पहल स्थापित किया है। यही कारण है कि वर्तमान में भारत के साथ थाईलैंड की साझेदारी संयुक्त राज्य अमेरिका की तुलना में कहीं अधिक व्यावहारिक है। फिर भी, चीन की बढ़ती गतिशीलता को संतुलित करने में दोनों पक्षों को और अधिक कार्य करने की आवश्यकता है। फिर भी इस बात से इंकार नहीं किया जा सकता है कि एक पुराना संगठन होने के बावजूद बिम्स्टेक ने दक्षिण-दक्षिणपूर्व एशियाई क्षेत्रवाद की विशेषता वाली एक नई गतिशीलता को प्रतिबिंबित करता है। इस तेजी से बदलते और अत्यधिक प्रतिस्पर्धी क्षेत्र में भारत और थाईलैंड के मध्य साझेदारी दोनों के राष्ट्रीय हितों के लिए काफी महत्वपूर्ण है।

संदर्भ—ग्रंथ सूची—

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भारतीय लोकतंत्र में मीडिया के बदलते स्वरूप और चुनौतियाँ

संदीप कुमार*

आलेख सार

जनसंचार एक निरंतर विकासमान और आधुनिक अनुशासन है। इस लेख के अंतर्गत 21वीं सदी में भारतीय लोकतंत्र में मीडिया के बदलते स्वरूप और चुनौतियों के अलावे भारत में विकसित हुई पत्रकारिता की परम्पराओं, उसमें आए परिवर्तनों एवं जनसंचार के वर्तमान स्वरूप का ऐतिहासिक व तुलनात्मक नजरिए से अध्ययन करने का प्रयास करेंगे। मीडिया राष्ट्रीय सीमाओं से परे, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक और राजनीतिक क्षेत्रों में मल्टीमीडिया प्लेटफॉर्म के माध्यम से समाचार प्रसारित करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाता है। इस संदर्भ में यह लेख इस बात पर ध्यान केंद्रित करता है कि क्या और कैसे भारतीय लोकतंत्र में मीडिया समाज और राजनीतिक परिवेश को प्रभावित करता है। विशेष रूप से, हम सबसे पहले इस बात पर ध्यान केंद्रित करते हैं कि इंटरनेट की नेटवर्क प्रकृति लोकतंत्र को कैसे प्रभावित किया है और सोशल मीडिया के आगमन के साथ यह स्थिति कैसे और विकसित हुई है। राजनीतिक समझ व राजनीतिक भागीदारी को बढ़ाने में सूचना के प्रसार की भूमिका पर ध्यान केंद्रित करके, हम फिर यह पता लगाते हैं कि कैसे सोशल मीडिया इस प्रक्रिया को आगे बढ़ाता है। इस बात पर विशेष ध्यान देते हुए यह तलाशने की कोशिश करेंगे कि कैसे मीडिया के बदलते स्वरूप ने भारतीय लोकतंत्र को प्रभावित किया है।

शब्द कुंजी : भारतीय मीडिया, राजनीति, लोकतंत्र, जनसंचार, तकनीक, इंटरनेट, सोशल मीडिया, डिजिटल युग

भारतीय लोकतंत्र व मीडिया का प्रसार :

दुनिया के सबसे बड़े लोकतांत्रिक देश भारत में लोकतांत्रिक तंत्रों के साथ मीडिया के स्वरूपों में निरंतर विस्तार जारी है। भारतीय लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था में सामाजिक, राजनीतिक, आर्थिक, सांस्कृतिक परिवर्तन के साथ मीडिया के स्वरूपों में विभिन्न स्तरों पर आये बदलाव और चुनौतियाँ हमारे सामने सशक्त मॉडल और गंभीर प्रश्न बनकर खड़ा है। खासकर 21वीं सदी के भारतीय मीडिया को तकनीकी विकास, विज्ञान, इंटरनेट, सूचनाओं और डिजिटल युग के उभार का काल के रूप में जाना जाता है। भारतीय लोकतंत्र में मीडिया के बदलते स्वरूप व नवीन तकनीकों के आगमन से सम्पूर्ण भारतीय समाज के छात्र-युवाओं से लेकर अभिभावकों का समूह सकारात्मक व नकारात्मक रूप से प्रभावित हो रहे हैं।

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तकनीकी विकास और भारतीय मीडिया :

भारत में इंटरनेट के आगमन से मानों मीडिया जगत में उनके कामकाज की शैली में क्रांतिकारी बदलाव देखने को मिलते हैं। वर्तमान समय में बदलते सूचना तकनीकी यंत्रों की विशेषता है कि इंटरनेट ने वैश्वीकरण की रुपरेखा, नीतियों और मीडिया जगत से प्रकाशित होने वाले नवीन समाचारों को सम्पूर्ण विश्व के पटल पर आम आवाज तक सरल माध्यम से विभिन्न भाषाओं में पहुँचाने में अहम् योगदान निभाया है। मनुष्य एक सामाजिक प्राणी है, उसे अपने आसपास के परिवेश और समाज से बहुत लगाव होता है।

प्राचीन समय लेकर वर्तमान समय में भारतीय समाज स्थानीय परिवेश के राजनीतिक, सांस्कृतिक सहित देश और विदेश के समसामयिक विभिन्न घटनाओं की जानकारी से अवगत होने के लिए संचार के विविध माध्यमों पर आश्रित रहा है। इंटरनेट के वैश्विक विस्तार ने संचार माध्यमों को विकसित कर आम-आवाज के बीच खबरों को बेहद सुगमता से पहुँचाने में सफलता प्राप्त की और निरंतर आगे बढ़ रही है। प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता के मामले में रिपोर्टर्स विदाउट बॉर्डर्स (आरएसएफ) की रिपोर्ट 2023 के अनुसार 180 देशों में भारत 161वें पायदान पर है। इस प्रकार भारत उन 31 देशों में शामिल है, जहाँ आरएसएफ का मानना है कि पत्रकारों के लिए स्थिति 'बहुत गंभीर' है।

मीडिया की भूमिका व महत्व :

स्वतंत्र मीडिया के बिना लोकतंत्र अप्रभावी है क्योंकि वे अविभाज्य हैं। सक्रिय लोकतंत्र के लिए निष्पक्ष मीडिया का रहना अत्यंत जरूरी है। मीडिया को लोकतंत्र का चौथा प्रमुख स्तंभ माना जाता है। पत्रकारिता जनसेवा है, इसका परम लक्ष्य खबरों को एकत्रित करना, उन्हें छापना,

प्रसारित करना, तथा अधिक से अधिक लोगों तक खबर को पहुँचाना है। पत्रकारिता का दायित्व निष्पक्ष होकर सरकार की जनकल्याणकारी योजनाओं व नीतियों को जनता तक पहुँचाना और जनता के जन-समस्याओं को सरकार तक पहुँचाना है। इस प्रकार पत्रकारिता निरंतर सरकार की कार्यशैली का मूल्यांकन करने के साथ जनता को जागरूक करने का प्रयास करता है। पत्रकारिता के सन्दर्भ में वरिष्ठ हिंदी पत्रकार श्री प्रभास जोशी ने कहा है कि "कार्यपालिका, न्यायपालिका, विधायिका और प्रेस में, यदि मैं चौथा खम्भा हूँ तो पत्रकार होने के नाते मेरा अधिकार और कर्तव्य है कि मैं इन तीनों खम्भों को जज करूँ"।

मीडिया युग में लोकतंत्र के बदलते स्वरूप एवं चुनौतियाँ :

वर्तमान समय में विश्वव्यापी स्तर पर मीडिया युग का विस्तार तेज गति से हो रहा है। भारत में, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक, आर्थिक, राजनीतिक, शैक्षणिक सहित विभिन्न स्तरों पर मीडिया ने अपनी जगह बना लिया है। भारतीय लोकतंत्र में राजनीतिक दलों द्वारा राजनीतिक विचारों, पार्टी कार्यक्रमों, चुनावी अभियानों को जन-जन तक पहुँचाने के लिए संचार माध्यमों के तकनीकी यंत्रों का इस्तेमाल किया जाने लगा है। खबरों की दुनिया में लगातार हो रहे बदलाव के कई सोपान सामने आ चुके हैं। मीडिया युग के बदलते स्वरूप व चुनौतियों को मीडिया जगत में विभिन्न स्तरों पर देख सकते हैं।

मीडिया तंत्र की चुनौतियाँ अति व्यापक हैं और मीडिया की प्रतिमानों की रक्षा तभी संभव है जब मीडिया कर्मी समाज और शासन के कार्यों के प्रति एकलव्यी दृष्टि रखता हो। सीनियर पत्रकार

सिद्धार्थ वरदराजन के शब्दों में कहें तो “लोकतंत्र कोई ऐसी चीज नहीं है जिसे आप किसी संग्रहालय में प्रदर्शित करते हैं, बल्कि यह जीवन जीने का तरीका है जिसे संरक्षित करने, मजबूत करने और बढ़ाने के लिए लड़ना होगा”। मीडिया जगत में सबसे बड़ा भूचाल इलेक्ट्रॉनिक चैनलों के विकास के बाद आया जब खबरिया चैनलों के मौजूदा विकास ने सचमुच सब बदल डाला है। खबरों के अर्थ से लेकर उसके सरोकार को भी बदल दिया है, खबरों से मनोरंजन की नई शैली के सामने जनपक्षीय पत्रकारिता को हाशिये पर डाल दिया गया है।

लोकतंत्र में सोशल मीडिया विस्तार और फेक न्यूज की चुनौतियाँ

सूचना क्रांति के दौर में एक तरफ सोशल मीडिया के आने के बाद भारतीय लोकतंत्र के दायरा में विस्तार हुआ है। देश का कोई भी नागरिक, सामाजिक, राजनीतिक संगठन अपने भाव, विचार व सामाजिक, राजनीतिक कार्यक्रमों को सोशल मीडिया के माध्यम से देश की जनता के समक्ष रख सकता है। लेकिन दूसरी तरफ मीडिया में एक नया मोड़ सामने आया है, जहाँ सोशल मीडिया के जरिए लोगों के बीच में फेक न्यूज चलाया जा रहा है जिसका समाज पर बुरा असर पड़ रहा है। सोशल मीडिया पर असामाजिक तत्वों के द्वारा फेक न्यूज का प्रचार फैलाकर आम जनमानस के बीच में साम्प्रदायिक हिंसा का माहौल कायम करने निरंतर कोशिश हो रही है। सरकार और प्रशासन फेक न्यूज को रोकने के लिए तकनीकी यंत्रों का उपयोग कर लगातार प्रयास कर रही है।

सोशल मीडिया का इस्तेमाल आम चुनाव में अधिक बढ़ जाता है। राजनीतिक दलों के द्वारा

इसके माध्यम से अपने चुनावी मुद्दों व भाषणों को बहुसंख्यक जनता के बीच पहुँचाने का काम करती है। डिजिटल समाचार उपभोग सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार 60 प्रतिशत से अधिक उत्तरदाताओं ने कहा कि उनको ऑनलाइन सम्बंधित फर्जी खबरों का सामना करना पड़ा है। इसके विपरीत 3 प्रतिशत उपभोक्ताओं ने कहा कि उन्हें कभी भी ऑनलाइन संभावित फेक न्यूज का सामना नहीं करना पड़ा है। हाल के वर्षों में भारत में फेक न्यूज जैसे अफवाह खबरों में वृद्धि हुई है। भारतीय लोकतंत्र में मीडिया एक महत्वपूर्ण माध्यम के रूप में विकसित हुआ है। इसलिए केंद्र व राज्यों की सरकारों और चुनाव आयोग को फेक न्यूज, द्वेषपूर्ण भाषा और अफवाहों, ऑनलाइन ट्रोलिंग खबरों की क्रेडिबिलिटी में गिरावट, ऑनलाइन स्कैम आदि पर लगाम लगाया जा सके।

निष्कर्ष

राज्य की अवधारणा में भारतीय मीडिया को चौथे स्तंभ के रूप में देखा जाता है और इस प्रकार यह लोकतंत्र का एक अभिन्न अंग है। एक गतिशील और स्वस्थ लोकतंत्र के लिए मीडिया संस्थानों को पत्रकारिता के विकास में प्रोत्साहित करना चाहिए जो व्यवस्था से कठिन प्रश्न “सत्य के पक्ष में सत्ता के समक्ष खड़े हो”। भारत जैसे लोकतांत्रिक देश में मीडिया-तंत्र को जनता के मुद्दों को राजनीति के केंद्र में लाने का प्रयास करना चाहिए। मीडिया के समक्ष जो विश्वव्यापी चुनौती के रूप में फेक न्यूज जैसे अफवाह खबरें समस्या बनकर मौजूद है। यह मीडिया की विश्वसनियता पर प्रश्न चिन्ह खड़ा करता है। सत्ता, प्रशासन और मीडिया संस्थानों को संयुक्त रूप से पहलकदमी लेते हुए भारतीय लोकतंत्र में मीडिया के बदलते स्वरूप में आ रही चुनौतियों

को रोकने के लिए साझा प्रयास करना होगा ताकि भारत के लोकतंत्र और मीडिया की साख को जिन्दा रखा जा सके।

सन्दर्भ सूची :

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